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ABSTRACT

This issue of the Journal contains the following articles and features: (1) "Information for English Teachers"; (2) "The Group-Oral Test: An Experiment," by T. Reves; (3) "Finding a New Method for Testing Oral Proficiency," by L. Taharlev; (4) "The Experimental Oral Examination," by Y. Lapushin; (5) "One Vote for the Group Oral Test," by E. Ben-Yoseph; (6) "Hearing and Comprehending," by W. Rivers; (7) "On Choosing a Textbook for Your Class," by R. Gefen; (8) "Alternatives in the Teaching of Secondary School English," by R. Gold; (9) "On Teaching in Schools for Socially-Disadvantaged Pupils," by M. Tobin; (10) "An Experiment in Designing Functional Language Tests," by V. Whiteson; (11) "The English Corner," by S. Poreh; (12) "Games and Interaction," by A. Etkin; (13) "Vocabulary Games," by M. Koerner; (14) "Polished Diamonds--A Course in Speech Proficiency," by B. Freedman; (15) "Strip Poem"; (16)"News from the Instructional Television Centre," by D. Ben-Meir, S. Been, and Z. Kronfeld; and (17) "Letters to the Editor." Synopses in Hebrew of the articles and features conclude the volume. (AMH)

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Ministry of Education and Culture

Pedagogical Secretariat — English Inspectorate

ENGLISH TEACHERS' JOURNAL (Israel)

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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Teachers of English are invited to write short articles, reports and letters to the editor. Please write to "English Teachers' Journal", English Inspectorate, Ministry of Education and Culture, P.O. Box 292, Jerusalem, 91911.

"עלון למורים לאנגלית" מוצא לאור על-ידי הפיקוח על הוראת האנגלית, משרד החינוך והתרבות, ת.ד. 292, ירושלים
לכתובת זו יש לכוון את פניות הקוראים.

The "ENGLISH TEACHERS' JOURNAL (Israel)" is published by the English Inspectorate, Ministry of Education and Culture, P.O.B. 292, Jerusalem 91911, Israel, to whom all correspondence should be addressed.

Back copies of issue 23 (July 1980) can be obtained, price 8 sheqel, from שרות ההפצה, משרד הבטחון, רח' ב', מס' 29, הקריה, תל-אביב.
All previous issues are now out of print.

INFORMATION FOR ENGLISH TEACHERS

This year's Grade 10 will be studying according to a new Bagrut programme (i.e. Grade 12 Bagrut date Summer 1983), in all subjects. "Hebrew Literature and World Literature in Hebrew Translation" will be a compulsory examination subject, studies in modern Jewish history (including the Holocaust) will be greatly expanded, and in other subjects the number of question-papers (i.e. choices in the number of points to be taken) will be greatly reduced. In addition, the Bagrut certificate will consist of two parts: Part 1 — marks for the external Bagrut examinations set and marked by the Ministry; Part 2 — internal marks given by the school.

The revised programme for English will be as follows:

A. *External examinations* will be set and marked as before by the Ministry, but at two levels only — new THREE points and new FOUR points. These examinations will be in language proficiency skills only (i.e. no set reading texts). The new 3 points examination will consist of the oral interview test, listening comprehension, reading comprehension ("unseen"), a cloze test and other language exercises (e.g. an interrogative exercise or another test at this level). The new 4 points examination will consist of all of the above, and in addition there will be an essay and also additional language exercises of a more sophisticated character (e.g. paraphrasing sentences — "Shakespeare wrote the play called 'Macbeth'." PARAPHRASE: " 'Macbeth'.... (complete the sentence)). Thus, pupils now taking the current 4 points will do the new 3 points examination, and those now taking 5 points will do the new 4 points examination. Since the examinations are in language skills only, teachers will concentrate on these skills much more than many now do.

B. *Internal examinations* (Part 2 of the Bagrut certificate) will be given in reading set texts at both levels "תכנית מצומצמת" for those doing the 3 points examination and "תכנית מורחבת" for those doing the 4 points examination. Pupils in technical/agricultural schools will study technical texts instead of literary/general texts. Since these texts will be examined internally, much greater flexibility will be possible both in the selection of material and in the test-questions themselves. It is also to be hoped that the practice of some schools in having pupils learn 'model answers' by heart will thereby cease and their pupils will spend the time in reading, understanding and enjoying the texts themselves. The ENGLISH COMMITTEE of the Ministry of Education and Culture will draw up a revised list of approved texts, from

which schools or classes will select their reading programme, which must then be submitted to the English Inspectorate for approval (likewise, the internal question-paper). The Ministry of Education and Culture will also check a sample of these internal examination papers, in order to ensure some measure of reliability.

The current 6 point examination will be cancelled as well as the current 3 points (second foreign language), the two existing 4 point question-papers will be unified as the new 3 points, and the existing 5 point paper will henceforth be (from summer 1983) the new 4 points. There will not be any change in the 2 points GEMER paper.

Teachers are again invited to suggest new titles instead of/or in addition to items in the existing reading programme, including non-fiction material appropriate to the specia interests of different classes and schools. Please send your suggestions to: English Inspectorate, Ministry of Education and Culture, P.O. Box 292, Jerusalem.

Changes In The Reading Programme — Bagrut Summer 1981

Teachers are reminded that for the coming Bagrut examinations (July 1981), the follcwing changes in the Reading programme have been made (as announced in the "Director-General's Bulletin" and the "English Teachers' Journal", No. 22).

5 Points Paper: (i) the poetry programme will be compulsory (i.e. the non-poetry option has been cancelled)

(ii) the story "The Open Boat" and the essay "Comparing Vocabulary" have been taken out of the syllabus

(iii) there will be a choice between "Everything That Rises" and "The Blind Man"

(iv) the story "A Summer's Reading" will be compulsory

(v) the essay "The Jet Age Malady" will replace "One Vote for This Age of Anxiety" (taken out of the syllabus)

There will be less choice of questions on the Reading programme, thus obliging pupils to study all the items in the programme. A full programme was published in the ENGLISH TEACHERS' JOURNAL, No. 22.

4 Points Paper (both the 'Academic' and the 'Technical' papers): the story "The Standard of Living" will be replaced by "A Summer's Reading" (i.e. as an alternative to "Eli the Fanatic"). A full programme was published in the ENGLISH TEACHERS' JOURNAL, No. 22.

Listening Comprehension Test, Summer 1980

Following is the text of the Listening Comprehension test and one of the four scrambled sets of questions. An innovation this year was the giving of introductory instructions in English, as well as in Hebrew; the purpose was to get the pupils used to hearing a little English before they were exposed to the text of the examination itself. As usual, the text was broadcast twice (British female voice, American male voice); during the first broadcast pupils were asked to listen only and not look at the questions, there was an interval between the broadcasts in order to enable pupils to read the questions and answers, and during and after the second broadcast they were able to circle the most suitable answers.

The introduction in English was as follows: "Good morning pupils. Today you are sitting for your Bagrut examination in English. In a moment, you will hear the text of the examination, which will be spoken twice. During the first broadcast, listen carefully but do not look at the question-paper. After the first broadcast, you may open your question-paper and read the questions. And now — the first broadcast!"

The text:

Good morning.

In today's talk I want to tell you something about the game of *football*, its history, and its importance in modern life.

Football is by far the most popular *team game* and also *spectator sport* in the world. "*Spectators*" are people who watch the game. Every week-end in Great Britain alone, almost a million people play football. More than double that number go to a professional match every week-end. And nearly half the adult population in Great Britain is glued to the television or listening to the radio later in the evening to watch or listen to the programme called "Match of the Day". How did football become so popular with young and old people alike?

Football has existed in one form or another since the fourteenth century. By the late seventeenth century, English society had become very familiar with two kinds of football: these were the common street game and also the special game played on holidays. Later on, football became *less popular* with the coming of the *Industrial Revolution*, which forced workers to spend long hours in factories. However, in 1863 a small group of aristocratic enthusiasts established the organization called "*The Football Association*", and within twenty years football, as we now know it, became generally recognized as the national sport in Great Britain.

For a short while, the game was dominated by *middle-class* and *upper-class* gentlemen. But when factory workers began working fewer hours, the *working classes* were able to find time to play the game. Church teams, school teams, and factory teams sprang up all over the country. The *middle* and *upper* classes, on the other hand, began to give up the game. For them, it was becoming too professional, too commercial. Modern British football has strong *working-class* roots, among players, managers, and supporters alike.

Football has also been a way for *some* professionals to *move out* of the working-class. There isn't any limit on the salary they can earn, and when they move from club to club, they receive a *part* of the money received by their club for letting them go. However players who get very rich and make a fortune out of the game *are still the exception* rather than the rule.

Throughout its history, football has always been associated with *violence*. This violence (that is to say, *aggressive behaviour*), such as fist-fighting, stone-throwing, wounding or even killing with knives and many other kinds of violence, happens not only *on the field* — or, in its earliest days, *in the streets* (I am talking of *the players*), but also takes place among *the spectators* watching the game. In fact, the history of football has been a history of attempts by governments to suppress (that is to say, to forbid it by law), to suppress it entirely. Let us hope they will never succeed.

Thank you for listening, and goodbye.

Circle the most suitable answer. הקף בציגול את התשובה המתאימה

a) The number of people who go out to see a football game in Great Britain every weekend is:
   a) almost a million
   b) over two million
   c) over four million
   d) about half a million

b) "Match of the Day" is a programme on:
   a) Wednesday evenings
   b) Thursday evenings
   c) Saturday evenings
   d) Tuesday evenings

c) The kind of football people watch today in Great Britain has existed:
   a) since the late seventeenth century
   b) since the beginning of the twentieth century
   c) since the late nineteenth century
   d) since the fourteenth century

d) Football was once played:
   a) in churches and factories

b) only on holidays
c) only by workers
d) in the streets

e) At first, the Industrial Revolution:
   a) made it easier for working men to play football
   b) made it more difficult for working men to play football
   c) prevented everybody from playing football
   d) had no effect on football

f) Middle-class and upper-class Englishmen:
   a) have never taken any interest in football
   b) have become less interested in football
   c) have become more interested in football
   d) have always been interested in football

g) Working-class footballers:
   a) may become professional and then may leave the working class
   b) may become professional but never leave the working class
   c) do not receive part of the money paid to transfer them to a different club
   d) do not usually become professional footballers

h) Do professional footballers in England become rich through playing football?
   a) Yes, always.
   b) Yes, frequently.
   c) No, never.
   d) Yes, but not often.

i) Football has often led to violence:
   a) between spectators, especially those who watch it in the streets
   b) both between the players and between the spectators
   c) by the government, which would like to suppress the game
   d) between the players on the field

j) The man who gave the talk is probably:
   a) a member of the government who does not like football
   b) a historian who likes football
   c) a historian who does not like football
   d) a member of the government who likes football

The Teaching of English — Meeting of the Pedagogical Secretariat

At its meeting on 16 June, the Pedagogical Secretariat of the Ministry of Education and Culture discussed the teaching of English in Israeli schools. After hearing a report of Professor Wilga Rivers' visit, the Secretariat was given a

survey of the problems currently being encountered, such as the turnover of teachers, beginning English instruction in Grade 4 in some schools but not others, beginning English instruction in Grade 4 where Arabic was also being begun, the shortage of ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES (technical English) materials, the difficulties faced by teachers of technical English who themselves had no background in technology, the lack of suitable texts for less-able learners in the Intermediate Division, the attempts by some schools to begin English in Grade 3 for prestige reasons, and in general the difficulties of less-able learners in secondary schools. After a lengthy discussion, the following summary of the meeting was adopted:

1. the Secretariat records its appreciation of the achievements so far obtained in teaching English as a means of communication,
2. attention should be focused on the needs and problems of secondary school pupils who do not study towards a Bagrut programme at all (including special in-service courses for the teachers who work with these pupils and the preparation of special materials for these pupils).
3. a special study will be undertaken of the teaching of English in Grade 4, which will include an investigation to what extent English in Grade 4 helps socially-disadvantaged pupils to progress and also the effect teaching Arabic in this Grade has on the teaching of English (i.e. simultaneously beginning two languages).

Everyman's University — Certificate of Further Studies in English

תעודה בלימודי השלמה למורים לאנגלית

Everyman's University announces the following new course designed especially for teachers of English: a 350-hour academic course in Linguistics, the Structure of English, Modern English Literature, and Education. The course is specially designed for teachers of English as a Foreign Language in Israeli schools who are currently qualified to teach that subject up to Grade 10. This Certificate will be recognized by the Ministry of Education as a qualification extending their licence to include Grades 11 and 12. The course is particularly recommended for —

1. Israeli-born teachers whose academic training was mainly in British and American literature,
2. Immigrant teachers from English-speaking countries with degrees in subjects other than English,
3. Immigrant teachers qualified to teach English in Israel up to Grade 10,
4. Teachers of English who are already qualified and licensed to teach

up to Grade 12, but whose academic training was in English literature will also benefit from this course.

The course will cover the following areas:

1. Introduction to Modern Linguistics (with special emphasis on applications to language teaching),
2. Structure and History of English (with special emphasis on contrastive analysis and its pedagogical implications for speakers of Hebrew or Arabic),
3. Chapters in 20th Century British and American Literature (students will be permitted to choose from a selection of texts in poetry, prose fiction, drama, and critical theory),
4. Chapters in Educational Theory, Psychology and Psycholinguistics (with special emphasis on the history of foreign language teaching).

The course will be based on written materials (mainly in English, but some in Hebrew). Tutorial assistance will be provided at periodic meetings, and facilities will be available for students to contact their tutors by telephone. Audio-visual aids will also be supplied. There will be final examinations in all subjects, and students will be expected to present at least one paper of medium length (5,000-8,000 words).

The first subject-block dealing with *Approaches to Modern Linguistics and Contrastive Analysis* (English-Hebrew/English-Arabic) should be available as of February 1981. It is offered as a 4-month course of studies, and a preparation-load of some 10-15 weekly hours is recommended.

For further details please contact

The Registrar
Everyman's University
16, Klausner Street,
Ramat Aviv, Tel Aviv
P.O. Box 39328

מחלקת המרשם
האוניברסיטה הפתוחה
רח' קלאוזנר 16
רמת אביב, תל אביב
ת.ד. 39328

The English Curriculum for Schools

The Curriculum (Grades 5-12) is available from 'Maalot' publishers, price at the time of going to print 4.40 sheqel. Every teacher should have a copy of the Curriculum, and Teacher-Trainers and Teacher-Counsellors should all ensure that their 'charges' have a copy. The Curriculum is an indispensable part of the programme of studies for Teacher-Training (Pre-Service and In-Service). The address of the publishers is: Carlebach 29, Tel Aviv (Tel: 03-284191). Individual copies of the Curriculum can be obtained from the branch of the publishers at Rehov Borochov, 20, Tel Aviv

"A Book of Suggestions for Teachers in Grade Four"

The BOOK is available (price IS. 6.50 at the time of going to print) from שרות ההפצה, משרד הבטחון, רח' ב, מס' 29, הקריה, תל-אביב.

The BOOK consists of articles and of detailed lesson-by-lesson programmes.

Contents: *Articles*

Principled Decisions in Teaching English in Grade 4 / Raphael Gefen
Teaching English in Grade 4: General Principles and Bibliography / Nili Tager
Teaching Vocabulary in Grade 4 / Rivka Kressel
Teaching Script Handwriting to Beginners / Raphael Gefen
Why, What and How to Teach English in the Fourth Grade / Celia Bercovits
Teaching English in Grade 4 / Penny Ur
English in Grade 4: Reading Readiness and Writing / Aliza Halperin
Some Suggestions for Using the E.S.H. Books in Grade Four / Ruth Benziman
How to Make the "Pre-Reader" Come Alive / Tova Katzman
"English Pages for Beginners" (Textbook) / Nili Almagor
"I Can Read English" (Textbook) / Ada Fuchs

Contents: *Programmes*

English Teaching in Grade 4 / Lucy Marnin and Anna Sotto
A Suggested Approach to Teaching English in Grade 4 / Zafra Tatcher
Units for Grade 4 English / Lillian Englander

New Reader: "Stories for Israeli Readers"

This new extensive Reader for Grade 7 (and for weaker pupils in Grades 8 and 9) consists of features that appeared in the 'Junior English News" simplified newspaper during the past few years, but the English has been more simplified. The contents include HOLIDAY STORIES and STORIES FROM FAR AND NEAR, all accompanied by appropriate exercises. The book costs 12 sheqels and is obtainable from ENGLISH NEWS, P.O. Box 3349, Jerusalem 91033, Tel: 02-532491. Teachers can obtain a free trial copy, under no obligation, from the publishers.

New textbook for Grade 8: ESH (English for Speakers of Hebrew) Book 9

As announced in our last issue, ESH 9 completes the ESH series for the Primary School and the Intermediate Division (ESH 1 — ESH 12). This book is

intended for Grade 8 and constitutes the link between the ESH 8 Language and Reader books (for Grade 7) and ESH 11 (Grade 9). ESH 9 should be used in conjunction with the ESH 10 Reader. Innovations in ESH 9 are: (i) considerable work is devoted to classroom communication and role-playing activities, (ii) the content of the reading passages and situations is particularly suited to the age level and interest of the pupils, with themes and lexical selection geared to the ESH 10 Reader, (iii) special reviews and exercises are given at the end of the book, to be used either together with the unit or at a later date according to the teacher's decision.

Repeat Notice: new textbook series for Grade 8 — IZZY SMART

All three units of this series (published by NETA, School of Education, Tel Aviv University) have now been published. The series is intended for very weak pupils (C Stream) in the Intermediate Division or the upper grades of Primary Schools. It is not structurally or lexically linked to the other NETA programme "ENGLISH IS FUN", but is a little more sophisticated. As such, the ENGLISH IS FUN books are probably more suited to Grade 7, and the IZZY SMART series to Grade 8 (sometimes, Grade 9). The "hero" of this series is a detective named Izzy Smart who gets involved continually in all kinds of adventures. The programme contains stories presented in comic-book style, thus providing continuous visual reinforcement; the vocabulary is very limited and is continually being repeated. The programme also contains worksheets, games, flashcards and a cassette. The entire kit consists of three units — *Where Are My Bags*? (adventures of a tourist in Israel), *Where Is That Waiter*? (restaurant, foods, recipes, eating habits), *Where Is Our Guide*? (a tour of Jerusalem, visit to national and historical sites, map-reading). Every unit contains a workbook, a reading book, a cassette (one cassette for all three units), reading cards for individual group work, flashcards, and substitution drill cards. The kit is obtainable from GESTALIT, Derech Ha'atzmaut 68, Haifa, P.O. Box 2088, Tel: 04-666378, or from RAMOT, Rehov Karni, 13, Ramat Aviv, Tel Aviv (Tel: 03-415337).

New textbook for beginners: WE LIVE ON TELEM STREET

by Shoshana Postol

This new textbook (in two parts) is both a Reader and a Workbook and aims to develop reading skills by combining the neo-phonic and the global methods and to simultaneously develop the writing skill. The material presented in the book is situational in approach and is centred around sites and characters in

Telem Street and around events related to those characters. The book helps children visualize and also re-enact the happenings on Telem Street, by means of conversations, rhymed recitations and songs. Each PART of the book is accompanied by a Teacher's Guide. The book is published by University Publishing Projects Ltd., 28, Hanatsiv Street, Tel Aviv, Tel: 03-259057 and is distributed by Lonnie Kahn, Ltd., 5 Nahlat Binyamin Street, Tel Aviv (Tel: 03-624138, 629693).

Repeat notice: A–apple, B–banana

This series of A.B.C. letter-cards, produced by Shoshana Postol, is meant to be used in conjunction with WE LIVE ON TELEM STREET, but can be used independently. The letter-cards are accompanied by pictures of items whose names are familiar to pupils through their oral studies or which the pupils will eventually be required to identify in their textbooks. The letter-cards, to be used individually by each learner, will aid in the development of letter-recognition, sound-recognition, and the construction of words and simple sentences. The picture-cards, to be coloured by the pupil, can be used later for the construction of a dictionary or games.

New book of games: PLAY ENGLISH

This book of language games has been compiled by U. Akavia, M. Akavia, E. Olshtain, and C. Crumlish. In a collection of 126 games, the authors attempt to establish games as an integral part of the foreign-language teaching process. The book is published by University Publishing Projects and distributed by Lonnie Kahn, Ltd.

Miriam Herman and Phyllis Sacks: TELL ME HOW TO SPELL

This book, published by University Publishing Projects and distributed by Lonnie Kahn, Ltd., is intended to reinforce English studies in the Primary School through concentrating on spelling patterns.

New textbook for Grade 4: LET'S READ AND WRITE

by Lillian Englander

This *ABC Workbook*, published by University Publishing Projects and distributed by Lonnie Kahn, Ltd., is designed to provide the young beginner with

a step-by-step journey through the English alphabet. The presentation in the workbook follows alphabetical order; as each letter is introduced, it is accompanied by pictures of objects, the initial sounds of which are those of that particular letter. There is also a short writing practice in both upper-case and lower case manuscript print. Visual aids accompanying the workbook are Letter Picture Cards and a Vowel Ladder (a picture of a ladder upon which appear the short vowels). Each chapter also gives the child the opportunity to learn words globally from the captioned pictures accompanying each letter. As the book progresses, these words are shown as made up of letters already familiar to the pupils.

New textbook for Grade 4: MY FIRST BOOK

This book by Lucy Marnin and Anna Sotto and illustrated by Zofia Langer has just been published. The book is based on the phonic and global approaches, where individual letters are recognized, then learned and memorized. Numerous songs and rhymes provide variety and interest, and help aid the pupil in acquiring correct pronunciation. Published by Karni Publishing Ltd., Tel-Aviv.

"BAGRUT EXAMINATIONS IN ENGLISH 1976-1978"

This collection of Bagrut examinations between the years 1976 and 1978 (Winter and Summer dates) is available, price 4 sheqels per copy, from the following source:

משרד הבטחון, שירות ההפצה, רחוב ב' מס' 29, הקריה, תל-אביב

This booklet contains the Reading Comprehension passages, the Listening Comprehension passages, the Composition subjects, the Language exercises and the questions on the Reading programme (5 point level). No answers are provided.

New Textbook for Grade 4 — I LIKE ENGLISH by Zafra Tatcher

The material in this book is part of an integrated subject-centred programme of oral work and reading. From the oral discussion on each subject, certain words are chosen for reading purposes. Most of the words abide by sound-spelling correspondence rules, but are also an integral part of the active oral vocabulary of the pupils. A separate Teacher's Guide giving further explanations and suggestions is also available. The book is published by Yuval publishers, Haifa.

New book for Grade 12: TEACHER'S HANDBOOK to ESH ADVANCED LEVEL BOOK TWO

This handbook contains an Introductory survey of the General Aims and Rationale of the ESH Advanced language series, a breakdown of the components of the text, and, for each chapter, a detailed analysis, notes on specific items, grammatical explanations, hints for teaching and suggestions for drills and exercises. Published by Tcherikover Ltd.

ENGLISH NEWSPAPERS FOR SCHOOLS
GOOD TIMES LTD., P.O.B. 3576, Jerusalem (Tel: 02 – 525353)

ABC TIMES (for a strong Grade 4 class, for Grade 5 classes and for weaker Grade 6 classes)
JUST FOR YOU (for a strong Grade 6 class and a weaker Grade 7 class)
GOOD TIMES (for a strong Grade 7 class and for Grades 8 and 9)
GO (for Grade 9 and upwards weaker pupils, especially in MASMAM and MASMAR classes in technical and comprehensive schools).

The newspapers appear monthly; teachers of classes ordering copies will themselves receive a free copy of each issue as well as the very useful Teacher's Guide. For full particulars of the cost of subscribing to these simplified newspapers and the method of delivery please apply to the publishers.

ENGLISH NEWS and JUNIOR ENGLISH NEWS

(P.O. Box 3349, Jerusalem 91033, Tel: 02-532491)

Now in their eighth year of publication, ENGLISH NEWS and JUNIOR ENGLISH NEWS are monthly newspapers in simplified English. EN is usually for the 10th, 11th and 12th grades, and JEN is ordinarily for the 8th, 9th and 10th grades. English teachers ordering for a minimum of 10 pupils receive a free teacher's copy and a free "Teacher's Guide" suggesting exercises and questions on the articles.

Pupils read in EN and JEN about current events, controversial issues, Jewish holidays, Arab affairs, sports, pop music, television shows, and films. The crossword puzzle and mini-mystery stories are especially popular.

The Hebrew and Arabic translations of difficult words in EN and JEN are given in the "Vocabulary" at the bottom of each page.

Teachers may order the newspapers or receive a free sample by writing or calling the EN office. The papers are sent by mail or by private delivery to reach schools during the first week of each month.

In-Service Training Courses

During the Summer, courses took place at Bar-Ilan University, Haifa University and the Hebrew University for secondary school teachers, for Inspectors, Teacher-Trainers and Teacher Counsellors in Ramat Gan, and for primary school teachers in all the main centres. Special courses for new immigrant teachers took place in Tel Aviv and in Jerusalem. In June, the five-month courses for new immigrant teachers at Bet Berl and at the Greenberg College in Jerusalem concluded as did the year-long course at the Kiriat Yam Absorption Centre. The two-year course for Heads of English Departments in Secondary Schools, held at the Hebrew University, concluded. Courses for re-training general class teachers to become teachers of English took place in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. Budgetary cuts this year have reduced the extent of the various in-service programmes, but a course for retraining general class teachers to be teachers of English (one day a week) is taking place at the "Ahva" College in the Southern District, the course for Heads of Department in secondary schools at Tel Aviv University has entered its second year and a new course has opened at Bar-Ilan University. Courses for new immigrant teachers have opened at the Greenberg College in Jerusalem, at the Bet Berl College and at the Gordon Teachers' College in Haifa. The Givat Washington and the Orot Teachers' Colleges have set up English Teacher Training frameworks within their institutions. Last year, the Talpiot College in Tel Aviv and the Efrata College in Jerusalem set up similar frameworks. Twelve other Teachers' Colleges have long-established English teacher-training programmes. A course for Druze teachers of English has opened at Seminar Gordon, Haifa and a course for unqualified secondary school teachers has opened at Seminar Hakibbutzim, Oranim.

Books for Vocational Schools

The ORT technical school system has published the following booklets, in their "Vocational English Series".

1. "ENGLISH FOR THE STUDENTS OF OFFICE ROUTINE AND LETTER WRITING" by Flora Samuel (English correspondence and office practice, written especially for Israeli schools) suitable for the GEMER (Grades 11 and 12) examinatiion programme and as a first stage (Grade 11) in the BAGRUT, for this Trend (Secretarial and Office).
2. "ENGLISH FOR STUDENTS OF ELECTRONICS" (texts selected and exercises prepared by S. Lipstein), dealing with Holography, The Computer System, Burglar Alarms, Microelectronics, Soldering Tools, etc., suitable for Grade 12 pupils learning in the Electronics Trend.

3. "ENGLISH FOR STUDENTS OF NON-TECHNICAL VOCATIONS" by Anna Sotto, suitable for girls' vocational schools, a series of 21 situational units in connected story-form intended particularly for Grades 9 and 10, accompanied by a variety of oral and written exercises, ranging from 'true-false' to answering questions and writing letters.

These booklets are still in an "Internal Edition" in ORT schools and are being tried out experimentally during the current school year.

British Council "English Language Officer" appointment

Mr. Harold Fish, who served as English Language Officer of the British Council in Israel for the past three years, has been transferred to England, where he will study for his Ph.D. His replacement is Dr. Peter Hargreaves. English teachers at all levels in Israel schools, Teachers' Colleges and universities appreciate the help given by Harold Fish and his active participation in particular in our varied in-service training programmes and we wish him every success in his future career. We welcome Dr. Hargreaves and look forward to his co-operation and in our activities.

News from Everyman's University — Secondary English Level

The English team of Everyman's University is now developing kits of materials to supplement the existing self-study course "Everyman's English — Secondary Level". The kits are designed for use in classroom sessions and provide the teacher with prepared communication activities for group work. All teaching aids needed for the activities, i.e. posters, flash-cards, cue-cards, cassettes, work-sheets, will be included in the kits. This new material will be incorporated in the remedial courses (שעורי־עזר) for secondary school pupils offered by Everyman's University. An in-service training course to familiarize English teachers with the material will be offered later in the school year. For further details of the use of the Everyman's University course (television plus textbooks) for remedial courses in Grades 11 and 12 please contact: Everyman's English course — secondary level, Everyman's University, P.O. Box 39328, Tel Aviv.

THE GROUP-ORAL BAGRUT EXAMINATION: AN EXPERIMENT

by Thea Reves

The interview-type oral test, which has been part of the Bagrut examination for over fifteen years, has left large numbers of pupils, teachers and examiners with strong feelings of frustration. Since in their view the oral interview did not reflect the examinees' ability to communicate orally, serious doubts must be entertained whether we are justified in relating to the oral interview as a valid test of oral proficiency. The results of the interview test depend upon a wide range of subjective factors, which make the reliability of the test questionable too.

This uneasy feeling that the oral test does not serve consistently enough the linguistic and educational objectives laid down in the syllabus has accompanied the orals year after year; this feeling eventually generated some ideas which in their turn were developed into an experiment carried out in three totally different secondary schools in Tel Aviv as part of the 1980 Bagrut Examination.

The purpose of the experiment was to find a way of examining oral communication in a more natural, situational context which would

a) stimulate freer, real-life conversation
b) emphasize educational and behavioural values
c) enable examiners to evaluate the mark of the testee's performance more objectively.

Since the experiment was in its earliest beginnings this past year and the scheme was presented to the teachers during the first months of the school year, only 15-20 themes for discussion were chosen as an initial attempt, keeping in mind that 40-50 optimal themes would be the ideal range, provided that preparation for the test begins in Grade 11 and is a natural outcome of previous group-oral activities in the classroom. By the time of the examination itself, all the students will have discussed *all* the themes in one form or another, they will have had the experience of clarifying both basic general concepts and their own ideas, as well as learning and manipulating the relevant lexical repertoire.

For the examination each theme is written down on a separate card together with guiding questions meant to help the weaker or less independent thinker and talker in the discussion. Instead of a card, headline clippings from newspapers, news items, pictures, cartoons etc. can be used.

The teacher sets up groups of four pupils, taking into account their level of proficiency and their personality. The underlying idea in forming these groups is VARIETY within the limits of a "good chemistry" to be established in each group. Pupils are informed of the group to which they belong only on the

morning of the examination. This is the only SURPRISE FACTOR in the whole test: the PARTNERS the testees have to interact with, exchange ideas with, convince or be convinced by.

The actual preparation for the test and the test itself as viewed by pupils and teachers are reported below in accompanying articles by the teachers who participated in the experiment.

Marking the tests

Marking the pupils' performance was done as follows:

Two examiners observed different aspects of the testee's performance: one paid special attention to grammatical accuracy and to fluency of speech, while the other listened mainly to determine richness of vocabulary and accuracy of pronunciation. Each examiner also gave an overall mark to every member of the group for "COMMUNICATIVE ABILITY". As a result, each pupil got six marks altogether, which are then merged into one grade after the group has completed its session and after consulting with the teacher.

Thus, the two examiners' clearly defined and separate aspect marks, six in all, which are then amalgamated into one grade must produce a more reliable and objective valuation than one examiner's necessarily impressionistic grade, given in the interview-type test. This interview-type grade is not only necessarily biased by tester-testee interactional factors and by the well-known halo-effect, but is also given by an examiner whose attention is constantly being distracted by efforts to create a pleasant ambiance, to develop and keep up a lively and varied conversation, to encourage the student and to elicit the best possible response.

Since this was the first stage of a promising experiment, pupils were granted the optional possibility of an alternative, conventional interview-type test, in case they felt that their mark was lower than the one they expected. Only 5% of the pupils asked for a repeat examination. Of these 25 pupils, 9 raised their mark by one grade, 12 got the same grade and 4 deserved (but did not get) lower marks in the interview than in the group-oral test.

Conclusions

Improvements in the technique are obviously necessary. A way to help the weak student overcome his inhibitions, to change his self-image and to gain a new identity (by introducing gimmicks, role-playing, etc.) has to be developed. A method to raise the mutual responsibility for all the members of the group (by possibly introducing a group mark) would be welcome. The SURPRISE

FACTOR (who are one's partners in the group) has to be ensured and enforced strictly, so that the spontaneity of the conversation is genuine.

Since we not only test what we teach but also teach what we test, the educational benefit from this type of test will be invaluable, besides its linguistic and communicational value. Our pupils will thereby learn the unwritten laws of civilized conversation and behavioural patterns, in addition to idiomatic phrases inducing pleasant discussion.

The whole experiment was extremely exciting, instructive and rewarding to all those who participated in it. I would like to take this opportunity of thanking the teachers and pupils who willingly met the challenge of being the first pioneers in this possible future revolutionary change in the oral test.

FINDING A NEW METHOD FOR TESTING ORAL PROFICIENCY IN ENGLISH

by *Linda Taharlev*, Gimnasia Herzlia

Seven Grade 12 classes and five English teachers at Gimnasia Herzlia participated in the experiment.

Preparation

Once the list of proposed discussion topics was received, the English teachers worked together to refine the list by (i) selecting those topics we felt were appropriate to our pupils, (ii) adding topics, (iii) rephrasing the topics into questions or statements of debateable issues which would serve to promote a meaningful exchange of contrasting views. The most important criterion for including a particular topic in our list was: "Would the students normally discuss this topic among themselves in their own language?" If the answer to this question was negative, we felt it inappropriate to ask them to discuss it in English, particularly in a test situation. An overall list was developed and modifications were made by each teacher after introducing the topics to her classes.

It was specified that the final division of students into testing groups would take place the day before the test and that the students were not to be placed into actual test groups before that time. Thus, throughout the course of the year, we grouped and regrouped students, which gave each of them the opportunity to work with many others as part of a team and allowed the teachers to ascertain who worked best with whom and which quartet blended together and had the chemistry needed to form a successful discussion group. We all used different strategies as we attempted to appropriately group the students. However, when

the test day arrived and we had to make our final decisions, we found that our experience throughout the months of preparation, our instinct and our familiarity with the students as individuals and with the dynamics of the group as a whole guided us in forming the test-discussion groups. For the most part, our grouping was found to be "clean", i.e. inappropriate grouping was not found to have significantly influenced grades. This is not to say that there were not cases where we felt that had a particular student been placed in a different group he might have done better, but on the whole the groups were satisfactory.

Several methods were used to prepare the students for the oral test. Among them were:

Large Group Discussion

The teacher introduced the topic to the entire class and led a ten-to-fifteen minute discussion on the issue, placing particular emphasis on important lexical items.

Small Group Discussion

Students were divided into groups of four and worked together on small group discussions as the teacher circulated among the groups to help with vocabulary, give a dying discussion a new breath of life or insure that no individual monopolized the discussion in a given group.

Group Presentations

The teacher assigned a group of four students the task of preparing a discussion on a given topic. The group then held their discussion around a table, with the rest of the class as their audience. Some teachers asked the audience to act as "examiners" and assigned students the task of grading their peers in grammar, fluency, etc.

Tape Cassettes

To maximize the number of discussions an individual student could take part in, we had students record 15-minute group discussions at home. For each cassette, the group was also required to prepare a vocabulary list of new and difficult words relating to the topic. The students were told that their work would be graded for fluency and overall communicative ability and that preparing for a discussion did not mean "writing" a "monologue" on the subject. We had some problems with students reading prepared or memorized texts.

The Test

We selected a bright, pleasant, well-lighted room for our test. The group to be tested was comfortably seated around a table, with the examiners sitting an

appropriate distance away. The teacher spoke a few initial words to each group to relieve the students' anxiety and then proceeded to explain the testing procedure. The students selected a TOPIC CARD on which guide-questions designed to help lead them into meaningful discussion were printed. The group was then given a moment to digest the topic, get their thoughts together and decide on their "strategy". (The group, at this point, had the option of selecting a different topic if the one they had chosen was deemed unsuitable.) The teacher entered the conversation only when the students seemed to have reached a dead-end or when it was necessary to quieten a dominating speaker or to gently bring a silent student into the conversation.

The Test Results

On the whole, the grades given by the examiners matched the teachers' expectations and were consistent with the teachers' own assessments. Ten per cent of the whole population exercised their option to be retested in the interview method. Of this group, the majority received the same grade in the one-to-one test.

Conclusions

Generally speaking, the teachers at Gimnasia Herzlia are pleased with the group-oral examinations. It is clear to us that a discussion format, in which a student converses with his peers, is a far more comfortable and natural setting than an interview with a strange adult. The art of polite conversation, often non-existent among our students, became an important thing to know. Students were required to perform in a group situation — to help each other, to take care not to dominate a conversation, to learn the many fine nuances of successful group dynamics. The entire style of testing calls for learning a set of behaviours rarely taught in our schools.

There are drawbacks in the system, mostly related to objectivity and consistency in grading. But these problems are minor and can certainly be worked out with time and additional experience. The benefits far outweigh any temporary negative aspects.

THE EXPERIMENTAL ORAL EXAMINATION

by *Yael Lapushin*, Tel Aviv Municipal Secondary School 11

When the idea of the group-oral test was suggested to us, it was clear that certain difficulties, psychological as well as technical, were going to arise.

The Psychological Difficulties

When our pupils learnt of the change, they were not at all pleased, although they are accustomed to working in pairs or groups. The technique itself was not new, but they objected to it. But why should they oppose it, if there was nothing new about it? The answer is that each student's dependence on the group was threatening. The oral test in the form of a personal interview can partly or mainly be prepared at home ; as a result, many pupils get higher marks than they really deserved. Sometimes the marks in the oral test were ridiculously high. Our pupils knew this, and as they all want to get high marks, they preferred the good, old, safe system. However, they relaxed when they were told that as "guinea-pigs" they would be given the choice of being tested in the conventional way if they were not satisfied with the marks (in fact, only 5% of the pupils asked to be tested again).

The Technical Problems

These were mainly problems for the teachers, since we did not have any material to work with. We started by preparing a list of 20-25 topics. I tried to present the topics in a way that would provoke discussion. I prepared a short set-induction, such as an article from the newspaper, a picture, a news item, etc. The second step was to point out the various aspects of the topic, teaching new vocabulary when needed.

Then I divided the class up into groups of four or five pupils, hoping that each pupil would have his own ideas and would voice them. In the beginning, groups were formed in the usual way — either with those sitting in front or behind. Later on, pupils were asked to change groups. This activity was undertaken for about fifteen minutes and sometimes even longer, because I never interrupted an activity which was going on so well. There were cases when it continued for an entire lesson. This discussion activity took place once a week.

Preparing for the Test

A few days before the test, we prepared the topics and guiding questions. Examples are:

Card No. 5. Schools in Israel

— Are you satisfied with your school? Why? Why not?
— Are there any changes you would like to make? Which?
— Should the Open School system be applied to Israel? Why? Why not?
— Do you think there is any room for private "prestige" schools in Israel? Why? Why not?

Card No. 17. Violence

— What do you think of when you hear this word?
— Do all forms of violence stem from similar circumstances?
— Can any form of violence be justified?
— Should our age be called "The Age of Violence"?
— Have you ever been exposed to any kind of violence?
— Have you ever witnessed any act of violence?

The day before the test proved to be the teachers' worst day because we had to form the groups for the test. We decided on heterogeneous groups: one group leader, two average pupils and one rather poor pupil. It was an almost impossible mission: since our school is an integrated one, we had to take into consideration factors additional to the pupils' knowledge of English — aggressive and dominant pupils, shy ones, snobs, and those who suffer from feelings of inferiority.

The Test

The pupils themselves learnt about the new groups only on the day when they were being tested, in order to ensure that the group discussion would be as spontaneous as possible. On the one hand, only very rarely was there a group where no "chemistry" developed among the participants. On the other hand, there were groups where the group leader did not fulfill this function, either because the others asked him to keep quiet or because he himself decided to let the others perform to their best ability. I believe that the problem of group-pressure should be dealt with in future. However, there were also many cases when one pupil really helped the others. For example, there was one pupil who actually kicked his friend under the table in order to encourage him to take an active part in the conversation. There were others who involved other participants with questions, e.g. "do you agree with Ronen, Avi?", thereby forcing the quiet ones to express their opinions.

On the whole, the pupils were satisfied with the new technique. We teachers found that there was a high correlation between the pupils' school marks in English and the mark they received in this test. In addition, we witnessed pupils talking freely — and that is the main achievement.

ONE VOTE FOR THE GROUP ORAL TEST

by *Esther Ben-Yoseph*, Tel Aviv Municipal Secondary School 11

The following is a summary of my feelings and attitude towards the group oral test before the experiment and after it. I will also describe the technique in training the pupils for the oral test.

When Mrs. Reves, the English inspector [illegible] school, suggested that we should take part in this experiment, my first reaction and that of my colleagues was that although it was a nice idea, it would not work at our school. The reasons for our hesitation and reluctance were the following:

1. The majority of our pupils are so called "less-able" pupils. This means pupils having limited motivation, most of them frustrated, needing on the one hand a lot of repetition and encouragement, on the other hand soon getting bored of drilling, hardly capable of intellectual effort in their mother tongue, so much the less so in English, therefore unable to create real communication. Yet, a great part of these pupils take the 4 points examination, which requires a great effort on the part of both pupils and teachers.

The minority among our pupils who take the 5 points examination are supposed, of course, to be better, but they still lack the ability and will to concentrate and work hard.

2. In previous years when the pupils were examined in the examiner-pupil frontal system, we were already used to the technique of training each pupil either by a five-minute short speech or by discussions in class. The subjects discussed by the examiners were about the same every year, so the pupils prepared a few subjects, wrote speeches and learnt them by heart. We didn't see any point in changing the form of the oral test because we thought that in the new form as well the pupils would learn speeches by heart.

3. We know that in any oral test the two components of the mark are *accuracy* and *fluency*. By *accuracy* I mean a proper use of vocabulary, grammar and correct pronunciation. Mrs. Reves made it clear that in the group oral test emphasis would also be put on the ability to communicate on the culture of conversation, on a natural and fluent discourse which would also reflect the *personality* of each pupil, thus adding one more component to the mark.

Bearing in mind the sort of pupils in our school, we could not even imagine any degree of success. Suppose I could teach them accuracy and even fluency, but how could I teach them to *communicate*?

4. There were also technical difficulties. Since we were not very well acquainted with the group work system, it was difficult to organize 32 pupils in groups sitting in the same classroom and discussing topics simultaneously while

the teacher had to walk around and listen, if possible, to each pupil, comment on his language mistakes, personal ideas and behaviour, and also guide the whole group in order to achieve, as far as possible, a real-life situation.

While the teacher was working with a certain group, other groups or individuals took advantage of the situation and spoke in Hebrew, not necessarily about the given subject. There is no need to mention the noise produced in the classroom, which caused a lot of waste of time.

5. Finally, to make things even worse, for a number of reasons we had only two terms of the 12th grade to prepare for the new form of oral test, which intensified our feeling that it would be an impossible mission.

In spite of the above mentioned problems and difficulties, we accepted the challenge and I am glad we did.

The Training Technique

I. *Before the conversation lesson*

1. Pupils were given a provocative subject which was supposed to create some motivation necessary for the debate.
2. Each topic included guiding questions or headlines.
3. Pupils were provided with a vocabulary list of words and phrases that might be necessary or useful.
4. The pupils were required to study the words at home and to answer the questions.

II. *In the conversation lesson*

Stage A.

1. The class was divided into two groups (two rows against two other rows).
2. The pupils were required to express their ideas for or against the argument on the basis of their preparation. At this stage the shy or inhibited pupils preferred to listen to the more talkative ones instead of being active.
3. The time allotted for this discussion was fifteen minutes.
4. After the discussion was over, I took up a few points for comment. Besides structural mistakes I corrected some responses that were inappropriate for communicative reasons — for instance, "shut up" or other similar remarks demonstrating impatience, lack of tolerance, misunderstanding, impoliteness etc. (10 minutes).
5. Some exercises were given for homework.

III. *The next conversation lesson*

Stage B. 1. The class was divided into groups composed of four pupils. While forming the groups the following considerations were taken into account:

a) The pupils were more or less on the same proficiency level in English, though one of them was a little better than the others in order to draw out the group if it got stuck at some point.

b) The pupils in the group belonged more or less to the same social background.

c) The groups were not necessarily composed of the same four pupils every lesson.

d) The pupils were told their group only five minutes before the lesson so that there was still some element of spontaneity and there was a minimum of fuss and disturbance while forming the groups.

2. Each group was given the same subject. Each pupil had to make up his mind which question to refer to and then started discussing. At this stage I started walking around from one group to another paying special attention to the shy pupils and trying to activate them. A pupil was chosen in each group to present a report of the group discussion. The discussion took about fifteen minutes.

I was surprised to realise that after three or four group-discussion lessons, the pupils were not as noisy as they had been in the beginning. In the course of time they got used to the group work and the discussions became more coherent and natural. I felt more relaxed and more able to control the groups. What is more, the initiative passed to the pupils. Sometimes I found myself with little to do unless a word was needed here and there, and so I prevented reversion to Hebrew and reminded the groups to reduce the noise level. Pupils even learned from each other, corrected their friends and were corrected by them. Pupils also helped and encouraged their friends to talk, thus making the shy pupils feel more self-confident, willing and even spontaneous. Some of them tried to preserve originality and not just to repeat phrases said earlier. This was probably the result of the group work, which minimizes individual competition. When pupils work in groups they probably know that the responsibility is shared among the four persons, so they will not be individually reprimanded if somethinig goes wrong. It was almost a real-life situation, which the pupils enjoyed and which made them sometimes forget that they were sitting in a classroom.

I believe that if the training for the oral test is started in Grade 11 classes, there will be no technical or time problem.

I also realised that in comparison with the conventional oral test pupils *did not* learn speeches by heart although they studied the subjects and the appropriate vocabulary. They simply could not learn by heart fifteen speeches, whereas in the conventional oral test pupils sometimes learnt by heart two or three subjects and used various tricks in order to succeed in the oral test without knowing a lot of English.

The difficulty in creating real communication among the less-able pupils in our school still exists, but to overcome it we need time, practice and education, maybe even special lessons in the Art of Communication in Hebrew.

As for the oral test, it was a genuine experience. Four pupils were comfortably seated around a table. On the table there were 15 cards with the subjects and the guiding questions. The group had to pick up one card. They looked at the subject and questions, thought for a few moments and then started talking. The examiners were sitting somewhere in the background, both near enough to hear the pupils talk, and far enough not to attract too much attention, and so prevent unnecessary excitement among the pupils. As for myself, I was sitting next to the group in case a pupil got stuck and needed encouragement.

A large number of pupils told me afterwards that they felt quite relaxed and sometimes even forgot that they were being examined. Moreover, there were pupils who enjoyed the oral test. I never heard pupils say that in previous years! They used to sit facing the examiner pale and shaking, almost paralysed.

On balance, the group oral test is, in my opinion, the only practical way to show the ability of the pupils not only to utter words or phrases in English, but also *to communicate* in English, to understand and be understood, to associate with or disassociate himself from the statement, to agree or disagree politely, to express doubts, to ask for a repetition, to express surprise, interest, or whatever emotion the statement was intended to arouse — in other words to be as close as possible to a real-life situation and to do it with a smile.

HEARING AND COMPREHENDING

by *Wilga M. Rivers*, Harvard University
(reprinted from "English Teaching Forum", xviii/4, October 1980)

"*What was that*? *I didn't quite catch it.*" This polite interruption demonstrates the difference between *hearing* and *comprehending*. In teaching students listening comprehension in a foreign language, we must realize that one is pos-

sible without the other. The listener in this case probably heard the actual sounds of the utterance quite clearly and even distinguished words. Linguistic information (identification of words and syntactic structures) was not necessarily the problem, but for some reason the listener was not able to construct a significance for them that seemed to fit the situation context. (The listener may also have preferred not to comprehend because the message extracted was displeasing. The remark with which this article begins is, in this case, part of a conversational gambit through which the listener allows the speaker the opportunity to reconstruct the original message in a way that is more acceptable.)

Listening is not a passive skill, nor even, as has been traditionally believed, a receptive skill. *Listening is a creative skill.* In order to comprehend the sounds falling on our ears, we take the raw material of words, arrangements of words, and the rise and fall of the voice, and from this material we create a significance. There is *meaning* in the linguistic arrangement the speaker has produced — the speaker's meaning — but *significance is in the mind of the listener.* That is why we can say of a person whose language we understand perfectly, "I find her incomprehensible." Even more difficulties of this kind arise with a language and culture with which we are only slowly becoming familiar.

Significance, which comes from the listener's side, is dependent on three factors.

1. There is the *linguistic information* that is extracted from the sound signal — that is, what listeners perceive aurally of sounds, words, and their arrangements in utterances. What the listener perceives is not necessarily what was emitted by the speaker, but once the listener has selected a sequence from the original signal, the rest of the sound signal slips from auditory memory and is no longer directly accessible for the reconstruction of an alternative message.

2. The *situational context* of the utterance affects what listeners perceive to be the relationship between what they have heard and what has been said, and also their expectations of what will follow.

3. The comprehended message is dependent on what the listener perceives to be the *intentions of the speaker.*

Looking at this act of comprehension from the point of view of the listener, we may invert the order of these factors in real-life functioning and say that what we perceive to be the intentions of the speaker in a certain context determines what we select and retain from the sound signal as the significance of the message. This is why "You cunning fox!" can be perceived as a compliment in one situation and as a deadly insult in another. Unfortunately, in teaching situations, it is often only the first factor, the linguistic content of the utterance (which in real life is the last to be comprehended) that receives much attention. Consequently, many students hear but do not comprehend.

Significance begins, then, with interpretation of the speaker's intentions. This interpretation is dependent on what we know about the speaker or persons like

the speaker (Parisian cab drivers, Texas oilmen); the expectations, the situation (as a continuum) and previous utterances have aroused; and the nonverbal behavior of the speaker (deep breathing, flushed appearance, shrug of the shoulder, faraway look, and so on). Information about the speaker's intentions, beliefs, and attitude toward the listener is called *interactional content*, and experimentation has shown that we recall much more accurately the actual words spoken when interactional content is high. In other words, the interpretation we have stored parallels much more closely what was actually said in this case, because we have more insight into the meaning the speaker intended to encode.[1]

The more we already know, the less auditory information we need to create a significance from phonic material. Hence we can "understand" distorted, noisy signals, defective signals, or even an uncompleted signal if our expectations in the situation are sufficiently accurate. This shows we are creating a message, not receiving one, since we cannot "receive" what was never uttered. Furthermore, we do not register all we hear. If we did, our language processing system and our memory would quickly become overloaded, and we would not be able to continue to function as comprehenders. In comprehending oral messages, then, we are not just extracting linguistic information, but we are selecting and matching what we have selected against probable messages that we are anticipating.

Recognition vocabulary

Schlesinger suggests that in listening we may not bother to process most of the syntax: that, for the most part, we move from apprehension of semantic elements directly, by matching, to the cognitive (or comprehension) level. He considers that we resort to the analysis of the syntax of the sound signal only when there is ambiguity or when, for some reason, we have not extracted a clear meaning from the signal.[2] If this is so, foreign-language learners need a wide recognition vocabulary for rapid comprehension, rather than a sophisticated knowledge of syntax. Most of the latter, it seems, will not be needed for this task, because if we took the time to process each message in detail we would never be able to keep up with the speaker.

To develop facility in comprehending spoken messages, students need much practice in recognizing aurally vocabulary they may have been learning mostly in written form. Here games, competitions, and other activities that require

1. J. M. Keenan, B. MacWhinney, and D. Mayhew, "Pragmatics in Memory: A Study of Natural Conversation," *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior* 16 (1977): 549-60.

2. I. M. Schlesinger, *Production and Comprehension of Utterances* (Hillsdale, N. J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1977).

quick word recognition, grouping, and matching are useful. Where this is appropriate for the language being learned, students should have much practice in recognizing cognates of words in their own language. This is not always as easy as we think, since most cognates have assumed very effective linguistic disguises. Students also need to acquire rapidity in "topping and tailing" — that is, in extracting the meaning of apparently unknown words by word-breakdown methods. They need practice in rapid recognition of prefixes and suffixes and what these contribute to the meanings of words. They need practice in aurally associating word stems with related forms that may have different vowel or consonant sounds (for example, *poor, poorly, poverty, impoverished, poorer, poorness; do, undo, redo, undone, redid*). They need to associate words in semantic fields, so that recognition of one taps the conceptual network [3] and makes associated words more readily available. This process is facilitated if vocabulary is acquired in a matrix of relevant material and there are frequent exercises in word associations.

The "click of comprehension" presumes knowledge of "the script"

Comprehension also requires a deep knowledge of the theme of the speaker's discourse, because much of comprehension is drawing inferences. A great deal of what we "comprehend" is not the linguistic information we are receiving at all. Researchers in artificial intelligence have become very much aware of this as they try to program computers to comprehend human language.

We may hear "He went into a restaurant. After the salad he felt better." Comprehension of this sequence requires us to know that one sits down at a table in a restaurant; the waiter brings a menu; one orders; the waiter goes to order the main dish; in America, the waiter frequently brings a salad for you to eat while you are waiting for the main dish to be prepared. None of this information is in the linguistic signal. Schank and Abelson have called the information we possess as a background to what we comprehend a "*script*"; and they work even more detailed scripts than this into the information bank of their computer programs for experiments on comprehension. [4] Because we possess this type of information about real life we are able to make inferences

3. The operation of semantic or conceptual networks is discussed in W. M. Rivers and B. S. Melvin, "If Only I Could Remember It All. Facts and Fiction about Memory in Language Learning," in M. Burt, H. Dulay, and M. Finocchiaro, *Viewpoints on English as a Second Language* (New York: Regents Publishing Co., 1977), pp. 166-67.

4. R. C. Schank and R. P. Abelson, "Scripts, Plans and Knowledge," in P. N. Johnson-Lard and P. C. Wason, eds., *Thinking. Readings in Cognitive Science* (Cambridge University Press, 1977), pp. 421-32.

we would not otherwise be able to make. In an American setting, then, "after the salad" allows us to infer that the person to whom the speaker is referring has already ordered a meal. "The possession of a script allows a speaker to leave many things unsaid with the certainty that the listener will fill in such gaps by default." [5]

Clearly, this is one of the obstacles to comprehension when we listen to a message in a foreign language. If the ways of life, customs, and values of the speakers of the language are very different from our own (or if the area is very specialized — for example, genetic engineering), we do not possess the same "script" as the speaker. As a result we do not understand, because we do not possess sufficient information to make the necessary inferences.

Similar to the notion of a "script" is what other psychologists call our "currently activated knowledge of the world." Note that, even if we possess the knowledge of the world we require for comprehension of certain utterances, this is of no use to us unless it is activated as we listen — in other words, unless we have picked up cues that direct our attention in a certain direction. In the usual social interaction, this orientation is supplied by the situation in its broadest sense. Where such cues are lacking, existing knowledge can be activated through titles or statements of topic. Newscasters on radio give headline statements before they give details of the news. In conversation, we do this with *topic focus.* We say "About your cousin's trip, it's raining in Haiti."

From the teaching point of view, we activate prior knowledge through *preparatory discussion* of related topics and by making sure key words are known and have been recently brought to conscious awareness. To do this, we do not need to place before the student a list of such words, but the well-prepared teacher with an integrated plan of activities will see that such key words have been used in some recent discussion before they appear in listening material. An unfamiliar key word must not appear near the beginning of a listening passage, since this can cause early confusion for the listener. It must be set in a context where its meaning becomes clear.

In natural communication, part of the "script" is what we know about the speaker and the situation and what we are absorbing from nonverbal behavior. With a foreign language listening experience on tape or cassette, we often know nothing of the speaker; the situation and its antecedents are not clearly specified; and we cannot see the nonverbal behavior of the speaker. The comprehension of the utterance is thus made much more difficult for the student. To supply students with background for listening material, we should give them, before they begin listening, explanations as to who is speaking to whom, the

5. "Introduction to Inference and Comprehension," in Johnson Lard and Wason, eds. (1977), p. 353.

nature of their relationship, and their expectations in the situation. With the wider availability of videotapes and films, students will have the additional aid to comprehension that a natural situation provides: a chance to observe movements and expressions.

Inferences

In extracting significance we have to make many *bridging inferences* which help us to understand the logic of the sequence. For this we need to be able to recognize logical connectives and relational words (*because of, since, therefore, not necessarily*) and words that establish temporal order (*before, after, at the same time*). Exercises should be developed to help students recognize these types of expressions rapidly in their aural form and draw inferences from their use.

When we understand what elements make for easy or difficult comprehension, we will see that success is not entirely dependent on knowledge of actual details of the language. We must help the students to bring into play factors that are operating in native-language comprehension: toleration for vagueness and ambiguity as the message unfolds; deduction from context, situation, and speaker in the situation; drawing inferences and inferring meaning of unfamiliar words; bridging and drawing conclusions not actually in the linguistic input.

False recognition memory

We store in memory our *interpretation* of what we have heard, and then we usually cannot distinguish this from what we actually did hear. This has implications for the testing of listening comprehension by multiple-choice items and true-false statements. In these types of tests, students who did not comprehend will select statements that were never uttered and yet be certain they heard them. Multiple-choice and true-false items, well designed, can be more than hit-or-miss elimination items; they can pinpoint genuine misinterpretations on the part of the students. They must, however, be carefully thought out to provide plausible alternatives to the correct interpretation of the speaker's intention.

Attention focus

If we begin by misinterpreting the significance of what we hear, we will continue to draw inferences from the wrong cues and finally develop a quite erroneous interpretation of the whole. Since we will have selected what to retain

and interrelate, we will no longer have access to the auditory image of the material we have rejected, and thus we will be unable to reconstruct an alternative significance.

For this reason, several sections of discourse (with ample context) are better for testing aural comprehension than one long discourse. In this way, an initial error will not ruin the whole test for the student, as may happen with one lengthy passage. The student has a new opportunity with each section of the test. Several passages constitute a better test also because they tap several different semantic areas, and this provides a much fairer assessment of the student's real knowledge of the language.

Levels of difficulty

Carroll has pointed out that listening comprehension ability tests correlate highly with intelligence tests, because both of them test "processes of inference, deduction, and problem solving that often accompany the reception of language." [6] For this reason, it is difficult to decide on levels of difficulty of listening-comprehension material, since this is not purely a matter of the difficulty level of the language material for the student (breadth of vocabulary, complicatiions of syntax, length of segments, and so on). The result of a listening-comprehension test is often all or nothing — the student perceived the significance or did not. This does not necessarily mean that the student did not understand the words or grammatical structure or would not have understood another passage of comparable length. Here we have another strong reason for testing students through a variety of passages in any one test, so that a passage that was found to contain unanticipated difficulties for a number of students may be dropped from the final score.

Testing the results of listening

In testing listening comprehension, we are not testing some vague entity called "the listening skill." We are testing comprehension of significance that has resulted from the listening experience (not "knowledge of the language" in itself). Students need knowledge of the language to comprehend, but comprehension goes far beyond this.

6. J. B. Carroll, "Defining Language Comprehension: Some Speculations," in J. B. Carroll and R. O. Freedle, eds., *Language Comprehension and the Acquisition of Knowledge* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1972), p. 3.

Rather than trying to give students practice in, and testing them on, something we call "listening comprehension," we should be testing "learning (comprehending) by listening."[7] listening which requires the listener to act in some way,[8] and the results of listening.

- Students listen for instructions that must be carried out in some practical way.
- Students listen to subject matter that must be learned and which itself will be tested (thus testing how well it was comprehended).
- Students listen as part of a global act of communication, as part of a conversational interchange, which can only continue when there *is* comprehension.
- Students take part in a continuing activity (for example, a series of episodes of a soap opera they are creating) where successive groups of students can perform their part of the activity only if they comprehended the preceding segment.

It is evident, then, that we must understand the essential processes in comprehending aural material[9] and the possible pitfalls for the students before we can prepare useful materials for student practice in this area and before we can construct valid listening tests. An analysis of the factors that make for easy or difficult comprehension reveals that comprehension is not totally dependent on what foreign-language material they have learned. The students' ability to draw inferences and construct meaning in situations in the native language will affect their facility in performing these same operations in a new language. Those who prove to have the most aptitude in this area will not always be those who perform best in writing or even in oral production. Students should receive full credit for their skill in this quite different area. The importance of aural comprehension cannot be overestimated, since *without comprehension there is no communication.*

(Editor's Note: this article was also the theme of Professor Rivers' lectures to teachers during her visit in Israel.)

7. T. G. Sticht, "Learning by Listening," in Carroll and Freedle, eds. (1972), p. 294.

8. G. A. Miller and P. N. Johnson-Lard, *Language and Perception* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976), p. 703.

9. Further information on research in the perception of speech and its implication for language teaching will be found in Wilga M. Rivers, *Teaching Foreign-Language Skills.* Rev. ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980) and in W. M. Rivers and M. S. Temperley, *Practical Guide to the Teaching of English as a Second or Foreign Language* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), Chapter 3.

ON CHOOSING A TEXTBOOK FOR YOUR CLASS

by *Raphael Gefen*

Every year the Ministry of Education and Culture publishes a list of approved textbooks for our schools. This list is based on the recommendations of specially appointed Readers (three for each book) who examine the material very carefully and make one of three recommendations: i) to approve the book (which is normally submitted in manuscript form) as it is, ii) to approve it, on condition certain specified changes are made, iii) to reject it. Most books come into the second category, and a lengthy correspondence then ensues between the Ministry and the author until some (probably compromise) agreement is reached. Authors all appreciate the comments of the Readers (except presumably those in category 3) and understand that these comments are made on the basis of knowledge of the subject-matter and familiarity with the Israel classroom. As far as English is concerned, we now have a very broad range of Israel-produced textbooks for all classes, except for ESP materials (i.e. technical English).

The rationale for deciding whether to approve a book or not is obvious — it must be appropriate to the subject curriculum and it must be appropriate to the *aims and values of the educational system of Israel.* A book for teaching English as a foreign language, therefore, must teach according to the curriculum and in accordance with the accepted methodological principles, as laid down in that curriculum ; it must also be written *with Israeli pupils in mind,* taking into account their specific Mother-Tongue interference problems and their cultural and social interests; and it must accord with general Israeli educational values. Furthermore, it must make every endeavour not to offend the susceptibilities of any sector of Israel society.

These conditions are not always easy to comply with, in view of the fact that we see the teaching of English as imparting a means of communication and therefore try to deal with issues of current interest. But on the whole we do succeed and the approved textbooks do reflect these principles.

Textbooks from abroad cannot fulfill these criteria: there is only one foreign textbook series at present on the approved list for English — the "New Concept" series by Alexander, which is a carryover from the period when locally-produced material was not readily available. This series will shortly be re-examined in the light of the principles referred to above.

However, we are all familiar with the fact that book publishers in the U.S.A. and Great Britain are very active in the English teaching field — English for foreigners is a very lucrative branch of their business, many Israeli bookshops display their wares and many teachers meet their salesmen. But these books are basically meant for English as a SECOND language, not English as a FOREIGN

language, i.e. they are meant for immigrants or students learning in England or the U.S.A., who are therefore massively exposed to unsimplified language throughout the day with all the effect this has on the syllabus (no grading or selection). Furthermore, these books are all geared to *their* local cultural/social situation and assume that the student is not only learning in the English-speaking country but is absorbing its mores, as an immigrant (or a foreign student) should. Lastly, these British and American books try very hard to reflect the teen-age or young adult "scene" and deal with all kinds of subjects found in Western "permissive" society. Many books which I have recently read are full of drunkenness, violent crime and sex — even some *Structural Readers* Stage I contain scenes of violence (The Prisoners, Car Thieves, Kidnapped, etc.). No doubt these themes attract the interest of the reader-learner, but this is not the only criterion for choosing a book to be studied in an educational system. American textbooks are more culturally-biased than British materials are (or rather are less subtle about it) and usually assume that the reader is a Spanish-speaker residing in the U.S.A., who above all wants to know how Americans live and work so that he can assimilate the more quickly.

I repeat that these are not the considerations which must underlie our choice of material. We do NOT teach English in order to have our children assimilate into American-British culture and society; we teach English as a practical communication skill (to use professional jargon, for *instrumental* purposes, not *integrative*). Clearly, the culture of a society is reflected in its language and our students must learn something about the British and American background in order to understand the language more thoroughly, *but this is incidental to learning the language and not the reason for doing* so. In other words, our students learn English as an international lingua franca, and not in order to integrate into British and American society.

Many new immigrant teachers (perhaps not only new immigrants) are not fully aware of these issues and sometimes feel more comfortable with a book from an English-speaking country, but in my opinion it is clear that a book written for a clearly-defined student population in this country, taking into account the specific linguistic problems of that population and its socio-cultural background, is the only kind of book that can genuinely be suitable. Foreign textbooks may be commercialy more attractive or artistically more appealing, but educationally they are not appropriate.

What I have written above refers essentially to textbooks, i.e. material for systematic intensive study. Auxiliary material from foreign publishers can be used by teachers at their discretion, but they should make sure it does not offend against the educational principles mentioned above (it clearly cannot take into account the specific linguistic problems of the Israeli pupil). Thus, most (but not all) of the extensive Readers available on the market, grammar books,

visual aids, collections of comprehension passages, and especially material in technical English are quite suitable (as long as a systematic intensive textbook is the core of the programme and these auxiliary materials do not come instead of a textbook), but here again the teacher should examine each item very carefully and consider whether it is appropriate or not. Where a teacher does wish to use a foreign textbook (e.g. for remedial lessons — not because foreign textbooks are more suitable for remedial work, but because a textbook different from the one used in the regular lessons is always a good idea), s/he must first obtain the approval of the Inspector for English at that school.

ALTERNATIVES IN THE TEACHING OF SECONDARY SCHOOL ENGLISH

by Rananah Gold

Teachers continually face the task of creating and maintaining a classroom environment that stimulates involvement in learning. No single condition can ensure such a learning climate, but if one critical ingredient is missing students become uninterested and restless. It is clearly not enough for the teacher to resolve that a relaxed, warm, involved classroom climate is important. A teacher's decision about the learning environment he wants in the classroom must lead him to an active inquiry for methods and materials which help him to create this environment.

There are certain factors in the classroom which hinder this environment. The teacher's attitudes towards students can often be a basic source of trouble. Much research has shown that a teacher's predispositions toward different students affect their classroom behavior and achievements. Although teachers feel a strong obligation to be fair and objective there is a generalized negative feeling, much of it based on past failure, toward students in the vocational track ("Masmar", "Masmam") of our high schools. Such negative feelings cannot easily be erased. When a teacher can experience success with such students, the positive feelings engendered can cause the self-fulfilling prophesy to begin to work in reverse. The teacher, by finding material at the ability level of the students, yet still mature in content, can help to create this needed feeling of success.

Another problem affecting the learning environment is the dominance of the teacher in the Israeli classroom. When the teacher becomes the only source of support and stimulation, much of the chance for student involvement is lost. Although the teacher must be an important source of ideas and values — students can learn from their peers. Particularly at the age of adolescence students are

strongly influenced by their peers and want their approval and support. Working in pairs or small groups can provide this support as well as give each student a heightened sense of personal responsibility for his behavior and the work of his group.

A third source of concern is teacher clarity. When students do not understand where the teacher is headed, what his goals are, they become confused and uninterested. In teaching English where there are many separate skills involved in communication, this is especially true. The use of themes in teaching English can produce a needed focus for the teacher and the student. When stories, exercises, simulations and games revolve around one theme, the students feel more confident and involved in their work.

Language is a means of communication and the student should therefore be exposed to all kinds of communication (visual, oral, aural) in English. The teacher needs to find materials that develop interest and excitement, themes that appeal to the student's natural sense of curiosity, and activities that will sustain student inquiry. Following are a variety of stories, simulations, tapes, and games organized around the themes of Science Fiction, Communication, and Newspaper advertisements. Most materials are particularly geared for work in small groups and offer opportunities for peer support and group responsibility.

SCIENCE FICTION

ONLY A STORY

The theme of science fiction was initiated by a reading *Only A Story* from the Scholastic Book Services Action Book Series. In the text a boy lies about having seen a flying saucer and finds it difficult to retract his story. The story was pasted on cardboard and cut into several parts. Students working in pairs pieced the story together. Sequence of events and organization of the story were stressed.

TAPE ON FLYING SAUCERS

Students heard a tape of a series of imaginary interviews between a *New York Times* reporter and a woman who claimed to have seen a flying saucer. The tendency of the woman to embroider upon her story each time she told it was brought out in class discussion.

THE FUN THEY HAD

The Fun They Had, also from Junior Scholastic, raised the question of life in the year 2000 and what students in the future would think of our schools of 1980. This story was cut into parts and put together with an appropriate title by pairs of students.

NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR 2000

Working in groups of four or five, students in class prepared a newspaper of the future. Each group received a list of possible headlines for articles including news, feature articles, sports, and advertisements. For example: Aliens Demand Three Day Work Week, Kidnapper Holds Planet "Z" Captive, or Vacation Trips to New Planets. Each staff member chose an article to write and the group worked with their editor in arranging and illustrating a page of the paper. Each page prepared by a separate group was in reality a mini-newspaper. The papers were typed, dittoed, and given to the students.

SIMULATION: LOST ON THE MOON

You are in a space crew scheduled to rendezvous with the mother ship on the surface of the moon. Mechanical difficulties have forced your ship to crash-land on the dark side of the moon at a spot 200 miles from the rendezvous point. Since your arrival depends on reaching the mother ship, only the most important items must be chosen for the trip. Your task is to rank the following items in the order of their importance to your crew. Possible items: box of matches, map of the moon, signal flares etc. Have a reason for your choice.

(From *Turn One!*, Stephen Smuin)

COMMUNICATION

SOCIAL SYMBOLS

A series of pictures were presented: flags of different countries, an ecology sign, a peace sign, a swastika, a cross, a Star of David, a black power fist Students wrote down how they responded to these symbols. Later, they discussed how we can communicate without words.

SECRET MESSAGE

Students read a story about a message in a bottle that was found at sea. The sailors follow instructions in the message and find a man on a deserted island. Surprisingly they are told that the message written in blood was not sent by him! Use of Morse Code by sailors was discussed and groups deciphered several messages in English using Morse Code.

AGENT IN BEIRUT

Several paragraphs were adapted from the *Jerusalem Post* article about the spy Shula Cohen. Shula Cohen, while spying for Israel in Lebanon, sent seemingly innocent letters containing secret information necessary to the Yishuv. Students sent each other letters in which they concealed secret information about

enemy troops and supplies. For example: "Dear Aunt Medina, I am so happy you are planning a party for Uncle Israel (the declaration of the Jewish State). I regret that I cannot come but Uncle Whitey (Lebanon) and Aunt Jordana (Jordan) will surely come (attack). They will be travelling by car (tanks) and arriving Wednesday morning. They are bringing some large packages (arms) for the party, so I do hope you will be able to meet them on the road to your house (ambush them). With love, Cousin Shula.

MESSAGES IN CODE

Two code games were solved by students. One code had vowel letters missing. For example: TH.S R..M .SF.RT..T..CH.RS .NLY. The second group used numbers, but not all the letter equivalents were given. Small groups needed to guess the missing letters in order to crack the code.

THE STORY OF HELEN KELLER

Excerpts from her book, *Story of My Life*, explained her first attempts at communication with her teacher.

PANTOMIME GAME

Several students made their wants known to the class without talking. Then pairs of students were blindfolded and they tried to talk to each other; they were made aware of how difficult it was for Helen Keller to communicate without sound or sight.

BLINDFOLD

Several students were blindfolded during part of the lesson and told to report their feelings to the class. They reported feeling cut off, isolated, bored.

NEWSPAPER ADVERTISEMENTS

READING THE NEWS

Real Estate and Restaurant ads were assembled from several editions of the *Jerusalem Post* and photostated. Pairs of students received question cards for the role play.

RESTAURANT ROLE PLAY

Example: Your aunt from Rio de Janeiro is visiting. What restaurant offers food she is familiar with?

REAL ESTATE ROLE PLAY

You are a real estate agent and must help the following people find a house or apartment. Example: Mr. and Mrs. Cohen are an older couple looking in Jerusalem for an old house. They wiuld like a quiet neighborhood.

CARTOON MATCH-UP

Cartoons and matching captions were photostated from *Mad Magazine* on the topic of "How Adults Drive Kids Nuts." Cartoons and captions were cut up in envelopes. Pairs of students matched the cartoons and captions and answered questions about each set. Example: What kind of homework is the boy in cartoon # 1 doing? A giant size cartoon was shown to the class and students wrote a caption for it and chose the caption they liked best.

HIDDEN PERSUADERS

Students were shown various pictorial ads taken from *Ma'ariv La-noar* and American magazines. They were asked whom the advertisements were trying to reach, also what hidden ideas were present in the ads.

Example: Finnair Advertisement

Age: adults
Sex: male and female
Hidden Ideas: Picture of two pilots, father and son, gives the feeling of stability, experience, tradition ... qualities we want in an air line.

Example: "Megaper" Advertisement for Houseslippers

Age: teenagers
Sex: male and female
Hidden Idea: If one wears "Megaper" slippers he will be popular and "with it", like the teenagers in the ad.

ROLE PLAY

Students acted out research on detergents taken from Vance Packard's *The Hidden Persuaders.* In the research, women were given three different colored boxes — blue, yellow, and blue and yellow. The boxes all had the same detergent inside. After testing the detergents, the women all reported that the detergent in the blue box left their clothes dirty, that the detergent in the yellow box was too strong for their clothes. They agreed that the detergent in the blue and yellow box was the best. The "hidden persuader" in this case was the color of the packaging.

ON TEACHING IN SCHOOLS FOR SOCIALLY-DISADVANTAGED PUPILS

by Michael Toben

Background and Procedure :

During a ten-day period eleven 2nd year English student-teachers from Seminar Shein observed and taught in seven different "socially disadvantaged" schools in the Dan area. They taught 152 hours all told. 40% in the fourth and fifth grades and the other 60% in the seventh and eighth grades. The time spent was divided equally between the three English ability groups (הקבצות). An additional 148 hours were spent in observing (and some teaching of) lessons on subjects other than English. As their pedagogical instructor, I observed my students' teaching and conducted extensive discussions with the host school's teachers.

Prior to this period the students had received a number of general lectures on these schools and a lecture-discussion was arranged with the local inspector. Furthermore, the students received five stencilled pages of things to watch for, and pointers on the teaching of similar disadvantaged classes two weeks earlier. We spent time discussing these pages and the students were instructed to write down any comments, disagreements, reactions, and additional ideas they might have during their ten days at these schools.

After the students returned to the Seminar, having completed the ten-day period, we had a number of "debriefing" sessions. Students raised points of discussion, described their experiences and argued for and against various approaches and methods. I collected the five stencilled pages on which the students had written down their remarks, adding a number of points that had come out in discussion but which had not been noted down.

The following is a summary of our experience that, I believe, accurately reflects the ideas, attitudes, approaches, beliefs and feelings of the eleven students and myself. I have shown the draft of this article to the eleven students and received their agreement to its contents and publication. There is nothing very revolutionary or startling here but it is more a question of having many of our ideas confirmed, of correcting our focus on many aspects of teaching and of having our humanistic convictions about education strengthened.

Specifically our discussions dealt with the factors commonly associated with the children of "Socially-disadvantaged" Schools: class control problems, ways to achieve effective class management, and methods.

Factors Associated with Children of "Socially-Disadvantaged" Schools

Many factors were touched upon such as overcrowding in the school classroom, poor teaching, a sense of discrimination (not necessarily ethnic(but it was felt that four other factors were more significant than these. The children's lack of self-confidence, a poor self-image of themselves, poor housing (as distinct from general poverty) and a non-intellectual home environment were all felt to be of greater significance. These factors, it was generally believed, indicated a serious lack of effective parental attention (not necessarily due to home or parental instability). Another source of problems that was seen as equally significant was the contrast between the typical non-conceptual type of thinking so common to the children and the need for highly conceptual thinking in school work.

Lastly it was also noted that there was a small but significant percentage of children whose responsibilities to their home and families were so heavy that they were physically and mentally often too exhausted to achieve even their minimal potential in anything but a perfunctory manner.

Class Management Problems

The personalities and dispositions of the children were the main source of class management problems that required the teacher's special attention. The students rarely witnessed truly violent children ; however, there were cases of the overly passive child, the funny boy and the overtly sexual type of child. There were children who received no treatment despite the fact that their teachers felt they should have been receiving regular, or at least occasional, professional help from either the school psychologist or social worker. These children often disturbed the lesson but their teachers gave them considerable freedom and license that was otherwise denied the other children.

The children were divided very sharply between those in need of constant attention and forever demanding it, and those who seemed completely absorbed in what they were doing, which was often no more than day-dreaming. This kind of introversial/extroversial split was much more pronounced than is usually found in "regular" schools. Generally speaking, the classes' attention span was felt to be shorter than they had experienced in the "regular" schools.

The children tended to be very excitable, loved to throw things (not necessarily at anyone) and became restless very quickly. They tended to move about the class and leave the room very freely if not restrained by the teachers.

The level of learning activity in the class varied between two extremes, from one of high involvement by all the children to one of non-involvement. To keep the balance of high-but-controlled involvement requires considerable skill on the part of the teacher since the children often lack the self-control necessary to

wait their turn to ask or to answer. The result is that once they have an answer or a question, they feel the need to immediately deliver it, irrespective of who is talking. Furthermore, they will readily argue excessively amongst themselves and with the teacher over what they consider right. This situation tends to disrupt the flow of the lesson and then may well lead the non-participating children to freely express themselves in whatever activity appeals to them. This, of course, can lead to a complete breakdown of order. The teacher finds the control of the class virtually impossible at such times and the children behave as if there were no teacher present at all.

Another very serious problem is the increasing loss of motivation on the part of children as they become older, which makes class management an extremely difficult task. The students felt that as the children matured many of them lost any hope that they could possibly learn anything worthwhile or relevant from a school experience. Furthermore, they lost confidence in their teacher as a source of help. This disturbing phenomenon was particularly true of the eighth grade, ability group C. The same highly effective teacher in the lower grades often found herself at a loss with such groups.

Towards Effective Class Management :

Anxiety: It was noted that, on the one hand, too strict a discipline tended to increase the children's anxiety, and on the other, since so many children lacked order in their home lives, they seemed to crave for it at least in their school lives. They clearly preferred the orderly teacher to the over-permissive one. One teacher advised two of the students to be very strict at first in order to achieve orderly behaviour in class and then start to reward the children strongly for correct behaviour and finally develop a friendly relationship. The problem here seems two-fold. Firstly, this approach has too much of a Pavlovian quality eventually leading to an over-dependent relationship on the part of the child needing the teacher's approval. Secondly, it was often observed that order was actually achieved only by yelling, browbeating, punishment and fear.

Human Relations: It was generally found that the key to effective class management that would not be inimical to good human relations and would be conducive to learning lay in the relationship between the children and the teacher. A relationship based on fear generated dislike for the teacher, her subject and everything she did. Shouting and screaming at the children was very bad for the teacher's image and in the end not very practical since the children quickly become immune to the teacher's voice. From then on a kind of escalation of tension between the class and teacher developed that led to extremes that were later regretted by both the children and the teacher. The tough and violent atti-

tude on the part of teachers tended to be mirrored in the behaviour of the children who would use the language of force and violence in reaction.

The students felt that those teachers who had succeeded in establishing a real human relationship with the children on an individual, as well as a group basis, were the effective teachers. They were not "soft," they kept good order in their classes and only occasionally raised their voices. It seems they had established this relationship right from the beginning, spending time and effort on creating rapport with the class before they got down to their formal teaching.

The effective teachers revealed this humanistic approach in many ways. They seemed to treat the children as they themselves would wish to be treated. They respected the child and expected to be equally respected. They showed each child that he or she was not less important than anyone else. They were always polite, saying "hello," "thanks" or "please". They were very, very patient with the children especially those who took a little longer to understand than the rest of the class. The result was that children were ready to say many times that they did not understand until they finally did. The teachers seemed to have learnt how to listen. They listened to the children's excuses and explanations for bad behaviour with respect and a seriousness that showed they appreciated the reality of the child's often problematic life. These were the teachers who spent extra time with the children who needed it after the lesson. To summarize this attitude from the point of view of the children, they seemed to want the teacher to be a decent, warm, but competent human being and secondly, a firm instructor. At times it was difficult to keep in mind that in classes of such teachers we were actually in a "socially-disadvantaged" school. The children's achievement seemed not to fall below the "regular" schools at all. The one sad note that must be added is that the ability group C, even with these special teachers, remained problematic.

Explicit Instructions: The students learnt very quickly that explicit instructions were a "must". It was observed that if instructions given to the children were unclear, contradictory, or not detailed enough, breakdown of class order ensued rapidly. The students realized that they had to explain and instruct with the objective of reaching every child in the class. Each child had to have a clear idea of what was being asked of him, and if possible an understanding of the goal of the activity. Many children, lacking the knowledge of the goal, will either abandon the task immediately and become restless and disturb others, or proceed with the task, making wild and apparently meaningless guesses. The students observed that teachers did not always try to concretize their explanations with as many examples as possible while minimizing abstraction, but the difficulties were acknowledged, since the central thrust of the school curriculum is indeed conceptual.

Interests: The interest of the class was effectively won when anything to do

with sport, airplanes, cars (for the boys), fashion (for the girls) was touched upon. Secondly all authority figures, such as the police, army officers, and teachers, aroused interest as did in fact everything that dealt with their everyday lives and the lives of real people, past or present. Not movements but events, not ideas but individuals. Lastly fairy tales, fantasy, legends, tall stories, jokes, the human body, health, love and sex were subjects they also responded to attentively.

Reward: Many of these children have spent their lives in an environment of failure and want, and are consequently in great need of some generous and positive feedback. It was found to be particularly effective, therefore, to reward the children in a more pronounced and demonstrative way than is usual in the regular schools. Big stars, the display of good work, and special privileges were successfully used in the lower grades, and high marks in the upper grades enhanced the children's motivation. All this, of course, must be accompanied with a smile and praise whenever appropriate. The danger of trying to please the teacher rather than reinforcing the desire to learn was recognized and it was felt that, provided the teacher kept this danger in mind, it could be avoided. The older children, it was found, liked being responsible, but the reward most appreciated in the long run was to show the children that the teacher cared about them and their progress. To quote Jonathan Kozol, "The real reason that I was able to get on with those children — is that I came into that room knowing myself to be absolutely on their side." (*Death at an Early Age*, Houghton-Miffiin, 1967)

Activities: Generally speaking, role-playing, games and songs were always well received and successfully carried out; for example, role-playing in situations that the children could see themselves in, games tailored very directly but simply to the subject of the lesson, and songs; all this, provided the teacher had a minimum of talent for drama and could and would sing with the class. It is worth noting that songs were not successful when the teacher treated the class as if it were some kind of a music machine — that is, she would sing the first three bars and then drop out.

The group-work observed was not always successful. It seemed that not enough attention was given to the clarity of the instructions and the object of the activity. Secondly, there was a greater need to structure the groups by giving out different functions and responsibility to the children. Lastly, insufficient attention was paid to certain technical aspects of the work; for example, clues to questions were, in one case, written on the back of the card that had all the questions on it. The result was that while one child was reading the question, another was trying to turn the card over to see the clues. The result was often chaos and fighting. It should be added that when these aspects of group work were handled correctly the children enjoyed themselves considerably and appeared to absorb the material in a sensible and serious way.

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Role-playing games, songs and group-work were all seen as particularly valuable activities since they trained the children in form of democratic behaviour and in civilized interaction that would hopefully lead to genuine communication.

Dramatization of the subject of the lesson before the textbooks were opened seemed to arouse interest, sensitize the child to the material of his textbook and contribute to sustained interest in the text itself when carefully gone over. On the other hand, the direct exposure to the textbook material generally led to a low level of interest quickly turning to boredom.

The Lesson: From the point of view of lesson structure, the key was obviously flexibility and open-mindedness. The good teacher was always the teacher that responded to the children's mood and the general atmosphere in the school. Pace and tempo were directly relevant to the lesson structure. Once the teacher gave the class a feeling of uncertainty about what it was supposed to be doing and what was next, there was an immediate reaction of restlessness that eventually would bring the lesson to a halt. Furthermore, the pacing and variety of activities were very clearly and closely interrelated; once the lesson became bogged down in one activity or a number of very similar ones the teacher began to lose control of the direction of the class. These comments are true of the regular schools as well, but in the "socially-disadvantaged" school the children's tolerance of uncertainty, boredom or a vacuum is much less than that of the children in the "regular schools. The lesson-plan was observed to be most effective when plenty of time was allowed for repeated explanations, when carefully worked-out links between one activity of the lesson and the next were built into the plan and when a great variety of activities to teach the same central concept were used. Review lessons had to be interesting if they were to be effective. They had to make reviewing appear, at least superficially, as if it were new material as opposed to simply repeating the previous lesson. Generally speaking, the children could follow the explanations and grasp the point of the lesson when the teachers had spent considerable thought on analysing all the small steps that constituted the total concept she was trying to put over. Often, when some small step in logic had been assumed and not brought out the children would get lost, and the teacher very frustrated with the children, often unaware of what the real problem was.

In Conclusion

Our discussion touched on the many "don't's" and "do's" that we had learnt, some of which I would like to list here. Don't yell — listen. Don't threaten if you don't mean it. Avoid meaningless drills, excessive repetitions, diffuse and wasteful arguments. Respect others at all times. Encourage the children to ask

questions as often as they need to without feeling embarrassed. Be sensitive to the child's bruised feelings. Stress good learning habits, self-control and self-knowledge. Encourage the children to discover things for themselves.

In conclusion, the eleven students and myself felt that we had learnt a tremendous amount in those ten days. We all knew that we had observed some truly dedicated and fine teachers, whom it had been a privilege to work with. We had the pleasure of seeing many children who seemed to be on the path that would lead to a richer and fuller life than their parents had experienced. Finally, we were left with a feeling of hope and the sure knowledge that there was much to do and much to learn.

AN EXPERIMENT IN DESIGNING FUNCTIONAL LANGUAGE TESTS

by Valerie Whiteson

A communicative approach to language teaching has led to a more communicative approach to language testing. One of the central problems in testing is validity. Does the fact that students fill in blanks or answer multiple-choice questions, for instance, mean that they are able to carry out various functions in that language? Can they also, for example, follow instructions, operate a machine, or take a message over the telephone? Tests which show that students are able to carry out such real tasks of communication are referred to as "functional" or "criterion-referenced" tests.

The objective multiple-choice, slot-filling kind of examination, referred to as "norm-referenced" testing, remains, at this time, the only viable way to test large numbers of students. The validity of such examinations, though, is a matter for consideration. Functional tests, on the other hand, have the face-validity the more traditional kind of tests often lack — the problem with this kind of test is reliability.

An experiment was carried out to try to make up functional tests for classroom use, i.e. with small groups of students, that would prove to be both reliable and valid. The subjects in this experiment were the teachers enrolled in the course for Heads of English departments from comprehensive and vocational schools in the TelAviv area organized by the Ministry and Tel Aviv University under the guidance of Ruth Baratz.

Thirty teachers were given an introductory lecture on language testing which included a discussion of the difference between criterion-referenced and norm-referenced testing. The group was then divided into seven sub-groups according to the schools at which the teachers were working. They were asked to think

about a functional test of English which would be suitable for their kind of students and were asked to bring such realia as manuals, diagrams, patterns, etc. to the next meeting, which would be a workshop.

During the workshop the teachers worked in groups with the assistance of the lecturer and the group leader, Ruth. This experience was also valuable in showing the teachers, themselves, how productive group work can be. By the end of this two-hour session, most of the groups had designed a test of language performance that suited their particular schools.

The teachers were asked to consider Randall Jones'[1] suggestions for designing accurate tests of language performance:

1. specification of the significant language criteria to the evaluated;
2. training of the judges or scorers with regard to these criteria;
3. construction of the test so that it is linguistically realistic and a rational sample of the language being tested;
4. proper administration of the test;
5. accurate evaluation and quantification of performance.

At the final four-hour session the group leaders presented their tests which were then discussed and analyzed by the whole group. A brief description of some of the tests follows:

a. for students studying fashion: a lady's three-piece suit is described in detail, i.e. colour, number of buttons, pleats, etc. The student's task is to draw the outfit described. The grading will depend on the level of the class with the best classes being graded on a pass/fail scale. Weaker classes will be given credit for whatever they get right.
b. agricultural schools: the test is in the form of a competition to draw an ideal farm — the plan of a farm not a picture. Students receive a sheet of arithmetic paper on which they have to draw the plan of the farm. They are given the scale and a list of items to be included, such as farm buildings, fields, irrigation systems, etc. Grading will be similar to that for the previous test.
c. secretarial schools: students listen to a recorded dialogue between a non-native speaker of English (the secretary) and someone who has a message for the boss. The details are repeated a number of times during the conversation but the dialogue is only played once. Pupils are given a message form on which all the relevant details of the message must be recorded. Weak classes will be allowed to write the message in Hebrew, while better

1. Jones, Randall, "Testing: A Vital Connection," in June K. Phillips, ed., *The Language Connection: From the Classroom to the World*, 1977, Stokie, Illinois: National Textbook Co.

classes will be required to write it in English. Grading only on a pass/fail scale with no marks to be deducted for poor spelling, bad syntax, etc.

d. academic classes: the candidate receives a letter from someone in an English-speaking country who is planning to spend a year in Israel. The student's task is to select a suitable flat or house from a list of advertisements cut out of *The Jerusalem Post.* Details about the family will be given in the letter. More advanced students will be required to select an advertisement and then answer the letter giving all the relevant details taken from the advertisement. Less advanced classes can be given credit for choosing the correct advertisement. Grading on a pass/fail scale.

The experiment was successful in that most of the groups produced what appears to be excellent tests of language performance. In order to be sure, though, the tests have to be tried out on a sample population. They have to be modified and adjusted and then tried out again. If they are successful, they must not be abandoned as most tests are. They should go towards building a battery of such tests which all schools should possess so that when testing time comes around, teachers have access to tests which have been shown to be both valid and reliable.

THE ENGLISH CORNER

by *Shoshana Poreh*

The decision of the pupils in Grade six in Romema school, Haifa to publish a permanent *English Corner* in the pupils' newspaper of our school has established an interesting, stimulating and rewarding activity in our English program. The purpose of this short note is to describe this activity and its organization.

Some Necessary Conditions

A condition for such an activity is an established monthly school newspaper. Equally important are the willingness of the teacher to carry out the difficult and often frustrating job of an editor with an enthusiasm which should be passed to the pupils, and his ability to confine himself to this capacity. Spelling mistakes and errors in sentence structure must, of course, be corrected, but every possible effort should be made not to alter the contents and style of the writers, who must remain the pupils of the school.

Pros And Cons

Whatever we teachers think about the significance of a school newspaper might not be as important as what our pupils feel about it. We have discussed the subject in our classes and here is a sample of the pupils' response.

— "It prepares you to be a correspondent in a real newspaper".
— "You can show it to your relatives".
— "When you write for the "English Corner", you learn new words and how to spell them".
— "We can send it to the pupils in America and even in Egypt".

Of course, not all the expectations can be fulfilled.

Some pupils cannot write, while others feel that they should be the only contributors. There is limited space in the paper and the teacher has to screen the pupils' many efforts carefully, remembering that a school paper cannot be perfect or very sophisticated.

Nevertheless, our English Corner is most enthusiastically read by all the pupils (and their parents), puzzles solved, and the results compared. The number and the changing roster of contributors prove that the paper is welcome and well thought of by most of the pupils.

The Contents

We publish every good contribution but we especially encourage

— poems
— news reports, holiday and vacation experiences
— short personal comments on everyday life
— crossword puzzles using classwork vocabulary
— comments about characters on our T.V. program
— announcements of events.

We also encourage joint contributions complemented by art work. From time to time, if space permits, the lyrics of a popular song are added to the English Corner. It is always received enthusiastically in school.

The following samples from the latest issues of our newspaper give an idea about the appearance of the paper and might help you judge for yourself whether a similar project could be introduced in your school.

(*Editor's Note*: Most of the contributions were accompanied by drawings or diagrams, which, we regret, we are unable to reproduce for budgetary reasons.)

Peace

Peace is a song,
it can last very long.
Peace will stay
With us everyday.
We won't have war
Any more at the door.
Rockets won't fly
Mothers won't cry.
At last it has ended
The days will be splendid.
There will be happy days,
Of love in all the ways.

Oded, Natty, Mordehay

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Welcome to President Sadat . . .

Sadat's airplane is coming to the Israeli airport in Lod. Our president, Efraim Katzir, is taking him to Jerusalem. Etay S. — Amit R.

Good Evening!

We are at the airport in Lod. Today is a happy day. President Sadat is coming to Israel. Ronen D. — Moshe R.

The First Day in School

On the first of September the sun in shining. The birds are singing. Suddenly, the bell is ringing. Many pupils are standing in line. A new teacher is walking towards our class. I am happy. Vered Matsliah

Haifa

I live in Haifa. It's a very nice city. It has a big port and a mountain, Mount Carmel. I live on the Carmel. We can see Haifa from the Carmel.

Dalit Mandler

In the Supermarket

I am standing in the supermarket and I'm looking at the chocolate. I forgot my money at home. That makes me angry. I would like to have some chocolate. My friends are buying sweets. I am sad. Shimon Gafni

Vegetables

Cucumber, potato, corn, onion, carrot, tomato, pepper. Yaniv Bar-Kana

English is a very important language. People speak it all over the world. We want to travel to Europe and the U.S.A. So we have to learn English well.

Ofer C. — Udi R.

Shhh . . . silent please

The teacher turned on the T.V. On the screen we saw the actor Hans Bernard (Mr. Cohen). He is painting a picture. Is he painting the wall? asked our English teacher. The children answered: No, he is not painting the wall. Sara B.

T.V.

I like the English lessons. They are fun. We play games and learn from our books. Our teacher tells us jokes in English. We get the English newspaper every month. We read it in class. Every Sunday we see a telecast. We love *Here We Are*. Miss Kaplan is very funny.

Hedva Shtark

A beautiful day

Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!
The sun is shining today.
All the birds are singing hurrah.
It's a lovely day. It's a beautiful day.

Yaniv Bar-Kana

The Spring

The sun is shining. The grass is green. Many flowers are blooming on the Carmel. Red flowers, white flowers. The sky is blue. The birds are singing. Summer is coming soon.

Mor

My dog

I want a brown dog,
With long hair.
I want a nice dog,
That looks like a bear.
It is going to run,
It is going to fall.
It is going to have fun.
And it is going to be sweet like a doll.

Sigal

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GAMES AND INTERACTION

by Amalia Etkin

We all enjoy games either for the sheer joy of it, for the need to be competitive, and as a welcome change of activity. At a British Council summer course I attended last year in Scotland, the participants took part in workshops playing the games themselves, in groups of twelve. These workshops were the best attended and the tutor, a young charming Scot by the name of Ray McKay, was the most popular tutor. As it is quite impossible to list all the games here, I shall describe a few. They can of course be adapted to class needs. Some can be played in pairs, foursomes or singly in front of the whole class, with the class participating as one group or divided into smaller groups.

1. **Blindfold, or Imperative Game**

One pupil is blindfolded, his partner guides him to some point in the classroom. Now he is given orders, using a variety of verbs, both positive and negative, such as BE CAREFUL, TURN RIGHT/LEFT, STOP, WAIT, DON'T MOVE, STAY WHERE YOU ARE, FREEZE, DON'T TOUCH... etc.

2. **Charades with various activities or dramatization.** (Can be simple or very sophisticated)

a cook burning a dish
eating spaghetti
eating with chopsticks
cutting tough meat
etc. (these are rather simple)

window-cleaner climbing ladder
painter climbing ladder (spilling pail of paint)
postman bitten by dog *
teacher late for lesson
conductor angry with violinist playing wrong note *
dentist pulling out tooth bitten by patient *
lady sitting at hairdresser's under dryer complaining (too hot or too cold) *
bridegroom putting ring on bride
man bumping into lady loaded with shopping bags, spilling them *
lady trying to kill cookroach with her shoe
husband and wife over breakfast table, annoyed wife watching husband reading newspaper *

(* These situations can easily be adapted to dialogue form.)

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Performing pupils are given instructions on a card. The point is not only to guess what it is but to arouse reactions such as YOU SHOULD HAVE... WHY DIDN'T YOU... YOU COULD HAVE... IT WOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER IF YOU... IT WAS NO GOOD BECAUSE...

The success of the game is the amount of discussion generated.

3. **I've Forgotten something Which I Need For**

the beach / school / our party / baking a cake / preparing a salad

A large, everyday, useful vocabulary can be practised, reviewed or acquired in this game. Here too there is room for discussion: YOU DON'T REALLY NEED IT, I NEVER USE IT etc. trying to justify, deny, express an opinion and so on.

4. **Describing What You See (Kim's Game)**

Even pupils who are quite good at compositions, or any written exercise, are poor at describing concrete items. The following game will prove useful: A number of objects (5-10) are placed on the table. The class has a few minutes to look at them before they are removed. Then the class is divided into groups, with each trying to outwit the other at remembering the objects. (They may jot them down.) Details too should be added pertaining to colour, shape, size. The items can be everyday useful utensils. The contents of a lady's handbag, a doctor's bag, a teacher's briefcase and others can prove quite amusing. Adjectives are practised in this game such as: used, broken, faded, old-fashioned, crumpled etc.

5. I have already played this game a number of times in my classes with success. Its name is *HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER*? A question is asked EXCUSE ME, I'M FROM THE BBC. CAN I ASK YOU A FEW QUESTIONS? OR: CAN I BORROW YOUR... FOR A FEW MINUTES? OR: WE'RE CONDUCTING A PUBLIC OPINION POLL. WE'D LIKE TO HAVE YOUR OPINION ON... CAN YOU SPARE A FEW MINUTES? 20 possible answers are listed here but there could be more. Other questions would elicit a different set of answers. The answers usually give rise to a lot of hilarity as no restrictions are imposed. They merely reflect the mood of the answerer. The only restriction is that they have to be in acceptable English. An additional bonus in this game is that intonation plays a very important part.

Excuse me, I'm from KOL YISRAEL. Can I ask you a question?

I've got enough to worry about. / Go away. / This is a stupid time to be asking a question. / Why ask me? / I haven't got time. / No. / Yes. / Must it be now? / O.K. / KOL YISRAEL!? / Leave me in peace. / I'm busy. / What do you want? / Glad to help you. / Well, if I must. / What do you mean? / Naturally. / Can it be a little later? /

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Though pupils mostly enjoy games teachers sometimes feel guilty spending too much time on them. After attending this summer course I feel that practical techniques do not need justification and should be used as a regular teaching tool as often as possible.

VOCABULARY GAMES

by Moshe Koerner

Eckersley in the introduction to his Teacher's Handbook (General Service English Wall Pictures) says: "Learning English is not, primarily, the acquiring of knowledge but the acquiring of a skill. It resembles learning swimming or tennis rather than learning history. Learning English, like riding a bicycle, is an activity. You learn to ride a bicycle by riding it; you learn to speak English by speaking it."

Language is learned behaviour. Learning a second language means acquiring new habits. It is a complex process demanding the acquisition of many skills.

Language has its origin in speech and it is with the spoken language that the learner should begin.

According to Dr. Seegers the child's ability to read, to speak, to write and to think are conditioned by his vocabulary.

Vocabulary (or lexicon) is an essential part of language learning. In dealing with vocabulary the teacher has a twofold task:

1. To get the students to identify the concept correctly, i.e. to know what the word means;
2. To get them to remember the words.

The initial presentation of vocabulary has as its purpose explaining the new terms, and driving home their meaning. Putting across the meaning of vocabulary is only a small part of vocabulary teaching.

We give the meaning in many ways: we show real objects, we show pictures, we dramatize or we paraphrase.

There are steps in teaching new words:

a) pronouncing them,
b) explaining them,
c) using them,
d) reading them,
e) writing them.

A language can be learnt only by using it. This means a lot of repetition, but it can bring the danger of boredom if we do not look for variety. One of

the methodological principles of modern language study is to keep the learner active and full of interest. Competitions and games are stimuli. They create interest and enthusiasm. We use games as an enjoyable and profitable form of practice to reinforce what has already been taught in a formal way. They increase attention and concentration. There are games and game-like activities to develop all the skills. There are a lot of vocabulary games. In this article I shall deal wtih some original games.

Word Completion Games

A passage has been read, the new words have been explained and practised. To remember them and get their visual image it is best to read and reread the passage. How can we get our students to do it?

Game 1

The first and the last letter (or the first and last two letters) of the words are given on the board. The number of dashes shows how many letters are missing. (To make things more difficult there might be only one dash.)

The students complete the words in their notebooks. A limited time is allowed. The books are open. To complete the words the students have to read and reread the text. When time is up we stop writing and the teacher calls on students to complete the words on the board. We can play the game with the class as a whole or as a contest, dividing the class into two groups.

At a later stage the students may complete the words from their memory.

Example (from ENGLISH BY TELEVISION, Stage Four):

The Statue of Liberty was given to the United States by the people of France in 1886 and it now stands on an island at the entrance of New York harbour. The Statue is a symbol of liberty for the millions of people who passed through New York harbour to make their homes in the U.S.A.

1. i — — — — d
2. e — — — — — — ce
3. h — — — — — — r
4. s — — — — — l
5. l — — — — — ty
6. st ——— e

Game 2

Two or three letters from the middle of the words are given.

Up to a few years ago, the Empire State Building was the tallest building in the world. It was built in the 1930's. It rises 102 stories above the ground. You can get an idea of how high that is if you compare the Empire State Building to the Shalom Tower in Tel Aviv, which has only twenty-eight stories above the ground. The Empire State Building is mainly an office building but

at the top there is an observatory overlooking the city. Very fast elevators take many visitors up to the observatory every day and from there the people look down on a very special view of Manhattan and New York harbour.

1. — — — — — rva — — — — —
2. — — — — — — ook — — — —
3. — is — —
4. — to — — — —
5. — — in — —
6. — — pi — —
7. — — ev — — — — — —
8. — — ild — — —

Game 3

The first two or three letters of the word are given. (Sometimes even four letters if it is a very long word.)

Example (The text is from the above-mentioned book.):

Thirty minutes later an inspector arrived at Mann Auditorium to investigate the case. The musician saw the inspector as soon as he came in and rushed right over to him. "Inspector, you must find my violin," he shouted very excitedly. "It's a very expensive instrument."

1. insp — — — — —
2. exp — — — — — —
3. vi — — — —
4. ru — — — —
5. inv — — — — — — — —
6. inst — — — — — —

Game 4

The last two or three letters of the word are given.

Example (The text is from the same book.):

The musicians of the Israeli Philharmonic Orchestra arrived at Mann Auditorium at ten o'clock for rehearsal.

1. — — — — — — — sal
2. — — — — — — — — ium
3. — — — — — — — ans
4. — — — — — — — tra

Broken Words

Game 5

The broken words are given on the blackboard. The students have to arrange them.

Example (See the text for game 3.):

The first part	The second	The third	The fourth
1	2	3	4
1. in	a. di	e. ment	i. rium
2. mu	b. stru	f. ti	j. gate
3. au	c. ves	g. cians	
4. in	d. si	h. to	

Game 6

The same game but we write the parts in mixed order.

Example (The same text as above):

1. ti	6. cians	11. au
2. si	7. ment	12. rium
3. gate	8. mu	13. stru
4. in	9. ves	14. in
5. to	10. di	

Memory Game

Game 7

The teacher writes 10 or 12 words on the blackboard and numbers them. The class reads the words in chorus. The teacher changes the pace alternately (slow — fast). Then individual students read the words. Each time the teacher rubs out another word and leaves the number until there are only numbers left. The students continue reading as if the words were on the blackboard.

To make it more difficult have the students read the words from the end to the beginning.

Example:

Stage 1

1. relax	6. island
2. inspector	7. freedom
3. mood	8. entrance
4. harbour	9. instrument
5. orchestra	10. search

Stage 2

1. relax	4.
2.	5. harbour etc.
3. mood	

Stage 3

1.	5.	9.
2.	6.	10.
3.	7.	
4.	8.	

Now the students have to write the words from their memory, each word at the right number.

POLISHED DIAMONDS — A COURSE IN SPEECH PROFICIENCY

by *Belle Freedman*

This is an advanced course in speech proficiency instituted about five years ago at Bar Ilan University, for students in their second year of studies who intend entering the English teaching profession. The course is obligatory for non-native as well as native speakers of English, and is given two hours weekly throughout the year, with an extra hour's remedial work for non-native speakers.

Its purpose is to develop a greater awareness of and sensitivity for the spoken language through imaginative thinking, and to encourage the students to perceive, relate and associate, so that the language becomes vital and meaningful, and aims at building up confidence, poise, and ability to communicate.

The course is broken down into the following components:

a. Relaxation and breathing exercises.
b. Exercises in rhythm and pitch, articulation and voice projection.
c. Interpretative speaking — or as I prefer to call it — 'speaking aloud'.
d. Intonation practice and remedial speech work for the non-native speakers.

For relaxation, I suggest various images, using emotive words such as — drift — explore — strong — submissive etc., while the students individually create their own movements. At a later stage, these words are recalled, and the students are encouraged to use them in utterances to each other, but without physical involvement. Then they pair up these words with their opposite meanings, e.g. drift — steady, aggressive — submissive, each student using a different word and conveying the meaning, first physically, then through vocal colouring. This serves as a preliminary to their interpretative work, building up a store of associations which can be recalled when needed.

After relaxation, we go straight into breathing exercises for capacity, and when the students have grasped the idea of deeper rhythmic breathing, we work on control of the outgoing breath, relating the breath groups to sense units. This helps to develop a sense of the rhythmic units of speech which make up the whole utterance. I suggest images of quicker or slower waves of sound, analogous to pacing or tempo in speech.

Intonation practice is begun indirectly through practice in rhythmic speech patterns involving pitch levels, as not only Hebrew speakers tend to use monotonic tunes. Once this is understood, the rise or fall of the tonic pitch does not appear to be quite so formidable.

Voice projection is taught as degrees of volume required in class-room situations, aiming at clarity, resonance and economy of breath, while retaining relaxed throat and jaw muscles. I use about 30 minutes of the two-hour session for the above exercises, honing down the time on each item as the students achieve

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a degree of expertise, and as the year progresses, working on the more problematic aspects only, so that we spend more and more time on the expressive work.

The interpretative work consists of the speaking of different types and styles of prose, lyrics, dramatic poems, ballads, public speaking and finally choral-verse and choral-prose speaking. I deliberately use the the term 'speaking aloud' rather than 'reading aloud' in order to convey the idea that the moment one turns the written word into sound, one is speaking for the writer, expressing his thoughts and meanings as if they were one's own. This compels the speaker to concentrate on meaning, involves him more imaginatively in mood and tempo, and results in a more relaxed and natural manner of speaking.

Punctuation, though used as a guide, is regarded purely as a written convention. My personal approach is that we speak in thought-units, pausing for a longer or shorter time between ideas, and disregarding diacritics that may inhibit the even flow or rhythm of speech, and often pausing when there is no visual indication.

There is no memorising of the material studied as my purpose is to expose the students to as many types of speaking material as possible. However I do not leave a passage until the above-mentioned aspects of speaking-aloud have been examined and applied to the best of the student's ability.

The remedial work class is devoted to intonation practice, problems of connected speech such as assimilation, elision, weak and contracted forms, and further articulation practice and vowel shaping where necessary.

Scripted dialogues are used for the basic intonation patterns, and only when the students are familiar with these, do we leave the scripts and go into role-playing using the dialogue situations and improvising others. This is kept as functional as possible. Finally we speak extracts from a modern play, usually one that has been studed in the Literature course or one from the Bagrut syllabus. This of course brings into play more advanced intonation patterns which is the result of involvement in the type of character the speaker is required to be, working on the maxim of 'how would you express yourself if you were character X'.

The final examination takes the form of an imaginary class-room situation in which the teacher presents a theme of her own choice to her class. This she introduces, and then illustrates by a piece of prose, a lyric and a dramatic extract or ballad or public speech, linking them up to form a whole. This takes place in the presence of the student's peers, two examiners, and any other interested persons. The passing grade is a B—, and in the event of failure, can be repeated.

(This paper was read at the Second International Conference on the Teaching of Spoken English, August 1979, University of Leeds.)

STRIP POEM

(reprinted from TEACHER TALK, McGraw-Hill publishers, Vol. 3, No. 1)

This is an activity which is sure to turn your students on. It involves student interaction and at the same time provides valuable practice in the reading, listening and speaking skills. This successful and popular technique can be adapted for use at any level, with almost any kind of material. The goal of this activity is to piece together fragmented lines to make a coherent finished product.

Procedure: This *strip poem* is for students on the intermediate and advanced level. Duplicate the lines below according to the number of seven-member groups in your class. Cut out each line and give every student one strip of paper. (Don't let on that each group is given the same seven lines.) The group's task is to reconstruct the poem. Every member has a vital piece of information that no one else in the group has. Members must communicate with one another, by first reading their lines and then working in a concerted effort to combine their lines into a coherent poem. Give the class a certain time limit, say ten to fifteen minutes. When the time is up, have each group present its own version of the completed poem. You will be surprised at the varied combinations. Some will work ; others won't. Encourage the class to discuss the merits of different combinations. In the end, present the original version for comparison.

Example:

I took the one
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
with a sigh
And that has made all the difference
less travelled by,
I shall be telling this
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I

Original version of the *strip poem*:

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I —
I took the one less travelled by,
And that has made all the difference.

(from *The Road Not Taken*, by Robert Frost)

NEWS FROM THE "INSTRUCTIONAL TELEVISION CENTRE"

by Dvora Ben-Meir, Sheila Been, Ziona Kronfeld

New Ideas in TV Material

Teacher's Guides accompanying the "Debby in Hospital" series were published towards the end of the academic year of 1979/80. Both the Regular and Alternative editions of these Guides include descriptions of and suggestions for utilisations of two team-learning techniques. These techniques are not specifically designed for the foreign language learning class, — they were presented as examples of co-operative learning at a symposium held in the summer of 1979 under the auspices of the Tel Aviv University. Both techniques aim at:

1. encouraging pupils to work together in an educationally acceptable way
2. fostering not only more efficient learning, but also more understanding and tolerance among the team-members and, eventually, social integration of heterogeneous pupils.

We feel that these principles should be implemented as extensively as possible throughout the educational system, and that English, no less than any other subject-matter areas, can be used as a vehicle for such implementation. Hence the team at I.T.C. made an effort to adapt these techniques to suit the need of foreign-language learners.

Since the publication of these Teacher's Guides, many colleagues have reported that the techniques "work," and that pupils, after overcoming the initial difficulties, really enjoy co-operative learning.

We offer below a description of the two techniques. *

* For a detailed examination of these techniques see:

1. Robert E. Slavin, Cooperative Learning. Balltimore, MD, Center for Social Organisations of Schools, The John Hopkins Univ., Report No. 267, Dec. 1978.
2. Using Student Team Learning. A Manual for Teachers, Center for Social Organisation of Schools, 3505 North Charles St., Baltimore, MD 21218, U.S.A.
3. Elliot Aranson, The Jigsaw Classroom. Beverly Hills, CA, Sage Publications, 1975.

I. **The S. T. A. D. Technique** (Student Team Achievement Division)

STAD is a technique that encourages co-operative learning through the discovery and/or drilling of grammatical or spelling rules. It can also be used for learning new lexical items.

The class is divided into groups of 4 pupils of different ability levels. Each group chooses a "team-mate." Each "team" vies with the other "teams" in the class for the highest score.

Procedure:

The teacher gives each member of the team a worksheet that deals with a specific grammar or spelling rule (or list of lexical items). Pupils help each other learn/practise/discover the rule by means of the exercise on the worksheet (See Sample Worksheet in Regular Teacher's Guide for "Debby in Hospital," Page 119.)

The teacher then hands out an answer-sheet to enable pupils to estimate their knowledge and their need for further practice. When the teacher feels that the teams are ready, each pupil is tested individually on the material studied. The quiz usually includes 5—10 exercises taken from the worksheet or similar ones. The teacher checks these quizzes as quickly as possible. The teams receive a collective score based on the number of points earned by each member of the team.

Since this quiz is a competition between teams and *not individual* pupils, the members of the team are motivated to help each other prepare for the quiz and thereby raise their team score.

The STAD technique offers a variety of scoring methods, taking into account the need for individual scores and for pupils to compare their own individual scores against previous performance. In these scoring methods, students of all ability levels have a good chance of earning maximum points for their teams.

II. THE JIGSAW TECHNIQUE

(As suggested by Dr. Elliot Aronson in *The Jigsaw Classroom*)

The purpose of this method is to give *each member* of a team the responsibility for understanding and learning *one section of* a text, in order to pass on this information to other members of the team.

Each member is dependent on the other members of the team for getting the information about the other sections of the text.

By pooling the information in this way, the whole team acquires *all* the information in the text.

The Jigsaw technique can be used whenever the material to be studied is in narrative form.

The basic "raw material" for Jigsaw should be a story, biography or similar narrative or descriptive material.

Preparing for Jigsaw

1. Choose a story or any other narrative text, which can be divided into 3/4/5 sections. Each section should be comprehensible by itself. (It may be necessary to reword or rephrase a certain section to this purpose.)

2. Group your pupils into teams according to the criteria you decide on (based on psychological and pedagogical factors). THE NUMBER OF SECTIONS IN THE TEXT DICTATES THE SIZE OF THE TEAM — e.g. a text of 4 sections necessitates teams of 4.
3. Prepare copies of the text for each team and cut them up into sections. Mark each section A/B/C/D accordingly.
4. Prepare a quiz on the whole text, two questions for each section.

Procedure:

1. Pupils form teams according to teacher's pre-prepared lists.
2. Each team chooses a "team-name."
3. In every team, each member receives one section of the story.
   In the case of a 4 section text:

	A			B			D	
B		D	or	A	C	or	C	B
	C			D			A	

etc.

4. Each pupil now spends 2-3 minutes trying to read and understand his/her section.
5. It is necessary for the pupil to understand and learn his particular section in great depth in order to teach it to the other members of his group. Therefore all the pupils responsible for the same section get together in "Expert Groups" as follows:

   All the pupils that have the "A" section of the text get together and form Expert Group "A". All the pupils that have the "B" section of the text get together and form "Expert Group B" and so on.

   THE NUMBER OF PUPILS IN AN "EXPERT GROUP" IS DICTATED BY THE NUMBER OF TEAMS IN THE CLASS.

   However, to ensure the participation of each member in the expert group, it should not exceed 5. Since we may assume that there will be more than 5 teams in most classes, it is advisable to split each expert team and have two Expert Group A, two Expert Group B, etc.

   In the Expert Groups the pupils not only study their section in depth, but also think of ways to teach this section to the members of their respective teams.
6. Each pupil then returns to his original team and, in turn, teaches his section to the rest of the team. They can all ask as many questions as necessary. By the end of this session all the team members should know the content of all the sections. (At any stage the teacher will provide the necessary help where needed.)

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7. Finally, the pupils are given a quiz on the whole text. The quiz is answered and graded individually. *The team whose total score is the highest is the winner.*

THE TEAM	*EXPERT GROUP*
(1) Each pupil reads his section quietly to himself.	(2) Pupils work together on the same section in their expert group. They help each other find the important part of each section and think together of ways of teaching it.
(3) Pupils return to their team and teach their section.	

The Teams

In order to achieve our educational goals, as stated at the beginning of this article, it is essential that the same team work together for a certain period of time. Since certain psychological and pedagogical factors must be taken into consideration when grouping the pupils, it is advisable to list the members of the teams in advance.

However, it must be noted that a "semi-permanent" grouping puts a certain constraint on the teacher's selection of texts for "Jigsaws." Since the number of members on a team must be identical to the number of sections of the text, it follows that throughout the period the team stays together, the teacher would have to find texts that can be divided into the same number of sections, e.g., if the team consists of 4 members — all the texts would have to comprise 4 sections.

Pupil's Comments

Pupils who have experienced this kind of learning situation made the following remarks:

- "The expert group helped me learn the material I had to teach."
- "I don't think I could have understood the whole story if I had had to read it by myself."
- "It saved a lot of time."
- "It was nice when everybody in my group listened."

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

THE LIBRARY HOUR AT SCHOOL

Sir,

The sound of the dismissal bell is still reverberating in the building and from the violently-opened doors the highly kinetic students erupt into the roaring corridors. One door remains calmly closed. By coming very close one can discern sounds of soft music. What can it be — "Eine Kleine Nachtmusik" or a Haydn minuet? No doubt a class in music appreciation! A peek through the keyhole reveals a teacherless desk overlooking a room full of pupils — pupils silently glued to books.

This, then, is the bewitching hour, the library hour where everyone does his thing for the sheer pleasure of it. Too bad for the bell if it comes just as the prisoners are midway in their escape-tunnel. Come in, seeing is believing. There is no need to enlarge upon the value and importance of reading books; the purpose of this letter is to describe some simple and practical procedures that have proven their worth.

1. Storing books:

In a teachers-room cupboard are lined up colored plastic containers (meant for the draining-board); each color represents a level of Reader (stage).

2. Distribution:

Several different containers are brought to class. Leave it to your students to find their level. Each student has an index card (kept by the teacher) with his name and number.

3. Teacher's role:

a) Walking dictionary and disc-jockey — a judicious mixture of light classics and pop (on cassettes) creates a Garden of Eden right in the midst of the blackboard jungle of homework pressures and fear of tests. The student who reads on his own level should have little recourse to a dictionary. Occasional difficulties are overcome by signalling to the teacher, who encourages the pupils to make an intelligent guess. We can train our students not to stiffen with fear on encountering a new word.

b) Checking of reading — as a book is handed in and you are in the process of entering the date on the student's card, you leaf through to an illustration and ask for a description of the goings-on. It takes all of twenty seconds to ascertain that the book has in fact been read. The question is posed not to imply suspicion but rather as a desire to share the excitement of the story. At the same time he is already looking for some title recommended by his classmates.

You will find that every period becomes a library-period. In their eagerness to get another book, they refuse to wait until the library-period several days

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away. At first, it may be disconcerting to have students stop you on your way to the teachers' room, or as you are opening your briefcase to start the lesson; however, the realization that you have inoculated them with the reading bug is the greatest satisfaction one can experience. (Practical hint: confine book business to the last few minutes of the period.)

c) Book Doctor: Today's books are bound-less, with the publisher's unwritten guaranty that they will not survive two readings. So in addition to your B.A. or M.A. you become an unlicensed book-surgeon. It is imperative to reinforce the spine and corners of newly-acquired books with masking-tape. In my briefcase I have a first-aid kit with needle, thread and hole-borer. Just give them the tools and they will do the job lovingly. So they learn to care for books in a more-than-figurative sense..

d) Book Dealer: Used books from home will be purchased at a fair discount; a note to the school secretary finalizes all deals.

At the outset of each term you will be asked "How many books do we have to read?" Heretofore, I used to set a quota of ten. The result was that the top students met that quota while the rest trailed along the normal curve. Last year, quite off-handedly, I said there was no quota, but quoted from the Haggada: "The more, the merrier." "כל המרבה הרי זה משובח"

The results staggered me. A full index-card (both sides) signifies twenty books; how thrilling when I had to staple on a second card, and a third. All this in an overloaded yeshiva high school program. It took some courage over a decade ago to designate one period a week as a library hour. When students in the sixth year start asking for "Exodus" before going on summer vacation, you have the greatest feeling of success.

Jacob Karsch, Kfar Haroeh

DEPARTMENT HEADS

Sir,

One of the activities undertaken at the Hebrew University course for Heads of English Departments in secondary schools was a continuous assessment of the work of the Head of Department. The following is the result of the discussion at a workshop for drawing up an assessment shart for a Department Head observing a lesson given by one of the teachers in the school.

1. Tell the teacher what you are looking for in advance. Example: I would like to see how the pupils relate to you; or — how you use the blackboard and how you present information questions (do not forget that the teacher's reaction will partly depend on your tone of voice; remember to be non-threatening).

2. Observe a teacher for some period of time in order to obtain a general impression, before looking for specifics.
3. Watch for the following:
   a) the planning of the lesson
   b) the use of the blackboard — quality and quantity
   c) the language used by the teacher
   d) is the aim of the lesson carried out?
   e) student participation (percentage, physical movement of students, teacher's repetition of pupils' utterances, etc.)
   f) how much activity is there during the lesson?
   g) what kind of activity is there during the lesson?
   h) intangibles (tone of voice, silence, clarity of expression, gestures, facial expression, body language, etc.)
   i) teacher's position (standing, sitting, walking around, being dramatic, etc.) and its influence on student learning.

Timing of the activity the pupils are engaged in is slightly artificial, but helpful when the lesson is not successful.

4. Ask the teacher you observed for his comments *before* you tell him how you feel.
5. Be supportive, but pinpoint your remarks after the lesson, preferably in private.

We would appreciate any comments readers may have on these suggestions, which should be sent to the JOURNAL

Miriam Shachak

TEACHING SOCIALLY-DISADVANTAGED PUPILS IN SHDEROT

Sir,

In teaching probably more than in any other profession the question is asked how much accumulated theoretical knowledge can be used in the classroom. In other words, how relevant are theories in real classroom situations, where various problems arise out of the blue and they have to be handled on the spot, instantly, without having much time to contemplate theories?

Many teachers claim that theories are useless when one has to deal with the many and complex problems that arise during a school day. My personal experience tells me that learning about teaching and the related subjects, such as educational psychology, linguistics, and others, have been integrated into my intuitive thinking and my spontaneous actions; therefore, when I act intuitively, it is partly based on accumulated theoretical knowledge.

Learning experiences, like the one in Jerusalem University course I recently attended for Heads of English Departments in secondary schools, have given me the tools and backing to make judgements and comparisons and in general to become a more objective appraiser.

Listening to my colleagues and the various lecturers who brought to this course their valuable experiences, skills and deep understanding of the many problems that face a teacher, has given me the feeling of belonging to a select group of people who are dedicated to the advancement of education in Israel.

It is important to theorize about education if we are concerned about effectiveness in teaching: to know, for instance, how to motivate students to learn English in Israel, sometimes under very difficult circumstances.

Having taught in Sderot for the last four years, I have found myself teaching the socially-disadvantaged pupils. No problems arose in this course or anywhere else, which do not exist in Sderot!

Sderot is very far from Jerusalem. And when I say this, I do not merely refer to physical distance, but rather to the immense cultural and intellectual differences. When we talk about the "social disadvantages" of the children in Sderot, we do not mean only the homes, but rather the whole environment that surrounds them. In this town, one cannot talk about the normal intellectual development that Piaget described.

Here, the children, even in the upper grades of high school, never reach beyond what Piaget calls "the concrete operational stage"; everything here has to be connected with concrete experiences. The pupils of my school do not reach "the formal operational stage", whereby they might deal with abstractions. Can one imagine learning a foreign language where the learner does not have the capability to transfer one set of knowledge to another situation?

Next we have Maslow's concept of "behaviour of development." He says that each one of us has an essential inner nature and potentialities. But without normal development there will be no actualization. For normal development certain basic needs have to be satisfied. Maslow calls this "the theory of need gratification," or "The Hierarchy of Needs." He gives us five stages in the hierarchy:

1. Survival — food and drink
2. Security — shelter
3. Society — need of other people
4. Status — place in society

And if we have the above four stages, we can reach the fifth stage which is: "Self Actualization," which means "I can do it." Point five in this hierarchy is what education is aiming at.

Question: Can children be taught and educated, if the basic essentials are missing?

In a place like Shderot and possibly many other places in Israel, school seems to be the only place which could possibly give the children at least the beginning of self-actualization. How can this be achieved in spite of everything? This is the big question.

I still remember when I first came to Shderot, and went into a classroom, where the students were candidates for the bagrut examination.

They did not even look at me properly, but just threw at me an annoyed glance and asked me: "Do you think that you will teach us English?" I answered as truthfully as I could that I did not know, but that I was willing to try, if they were willing to try with me. They agreed, and this is how I started my teaching career in Sderot.

Today the story has changed a great deal. English has actually become a popular subject in our school. I have taught all classes, and the bagrut class for the last four years. Some of my former students are in universities, many of course are in the army. But regardless of where they are, they turned out to be wonderful people. I know now, as I look back, that the hard work which went into my work was worthwhile. So, I will answer the question and say: Yes, it can be done, but only with a lot of hard work.

One of the lecturers at the Hebrew University course was Nili Eisen. With her humanistic approach to the problem, she gave us a great deal of insight into the very complex question how to teach English to the culturally deprived in Israel.

She defined some of the basic problems of the disadvantaged, which are:

1. Insecurity
2. Aggression — Passivity
3. Not having the courage to face complicated problems
4. Immediate demand for satisfaction
5. Appearance and Subjectivity

This was not the first time that I had heard these problems mentioned, but hearing the subject again helped me and probably the other teachers to know that we are not alone in facing this difficult task. But, still, the question arises why some teachers succeed (at least to some extent) while others fail completely. Here I would like to express my own opinion based on my experience.

When I first came to teach English in Sderot, I couldn't understand why even in the best classes the pupils didn't know anything. Yet whatever I started to teach, their instant reaction was: "We've already learned this" or "We've finished the book." My question naturally was: "How is it then that you don't know it?" The answer to my question, usually, was a blank stare. I soon realized that the idea of knowing anything in English was as foreign to them as English itself. In English one has to be a good copier to get good marks. And if you aim for real success, do not disturb.

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Now, how does one go about changing this attitude of complete passivity? The steps to be taken are many and difficult, but not impossible. To begin with, teachers should obtain the learner's trust by giving him a sense of achievement, based on achievement, whenever possible. Teachers should find out how much the learners know already, and to build up a hierarchial system of teaching. By this I mean that progress should be made based on the already-known. Learners should feel that they step on solid ground, and not have the feeling that they float in the unknown. Lessons should have stages, and the stages should have connections between them. At the end, the lesson should be summarised and checked, what was achieved and what has to be relearned.

Years ago, a large percentage of school-age children were ignored and simply pushed into the cheap labour market. But today, when mass-education prevails, a large percentage of school children are the disadvantaged. This is particularly true in Israel, where socially-disadvantaged pupils constitute 40-60 per cent of our school-age children.

This means that their education cannot be accidental. It should be well-planned, and teachers should be well-trained. Teachers should have more than understanding of the problems, they should also have patience and love for the children. I have felt many times that without honest love for the children, I could not have gone back, time and time again, into the classroom and brought enthusiasm into my work. I speak about classrooms where early in the morning one is faced with pupils who start off the day tired. It is up to the teachers to bring life into the lessons and consequently into the pupils.

The job is demanding, and rewards are rare, but every bit of success is an achievement.

Haya Markovits, Shderot

REFLECTIONS ON THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING STUDENTS DURING THE PAST YEAR

Sir,

Why do the English-speakers study English separately?

Before we embarked on any studies at all, I asked the students why they thought they were studying English separately? Their natural reply was: "Because we all *know* English!" I then proceeded to explain to them that they were very fortunate in having a basic knowledge of English and that they should take advantage of this knowledge and do their utmost to enrich their English both written and oral. They themselves enumerated the various means of improving their English.

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An English Library

This was the first priority on our agenda. I was amazed at the willingness with which the girls voluntarily brought books to donate to the school library rather than return them to the Book Boutique for a few lira. I would like to thank all those who so generously donated books, for without their co-operation we would have had no library. There is no school budget for this purpose, but I feel we proved we could do it alone and I derive great pleasure when I walk into the English room and find the girls spending their free time discussing and recommending books to each other. The bookworms have devoured all we have to offer and even the "non-readers" are slowly coming round to reading, with a few positive recommendations from classmates or suggestions from me. I make a point of inquiring about what they are reading, as they enjoy discussing their opinions with those who have read the book already. Reading is a very important and integral part of learning any language and I would sincerely appreciate encouragement from home as well.

Oral work is equally important and takes many forms. Some months we do oral book reviews instead of written ones. When we come across a controversial subject in our English newspaper and the students wish to express their views rather strongly on a certain subject, we arrange a debate. This provides them with a great challenge (they are bursting to say their piece in Hebrew!) in that they have to centralize their thoughts and ideas into point form, give examples and often speak in favour of something they may be totally against.

Acting — I give them a situation and they have to set it out. This they enjoy and the hilarious entertainment it provides releases the day's tensions.

Literature

We started each book we studied with an introduction to the background of the author and the period in which it was written. I asked the students to see if they could find any information at home on the various authors and some even went so far as to translate from Hebrew encyclopedias. We studied plot development and how important every detail in a book can be, even weather — a storm — can be a sign of imminent disaster. We analysed characters and learnt how a character is made up of vices and virtues — something none of them knew anything about. From there we took it yet another step further — the importance of each character to the plot and how the plot affects the life of each character involved in it. I no longer hear, when we finish reading a book — "Finished!" as we read the last page. They now know that reading the book is only the beginning and that the most interesting part comes in the discussions afterwards.

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Poetry

We started off at the beginning of the school year with light, humorous and even nonsense poems, my aim being to get the students to enjoy poetry as much as I do. I feel I achieved this aim and now we read anything from the Psalms (in English) to poets of the Romantic Period like William Wordsworth. With this end in mind and for lack of suitable poetry books available in Israel, our Headmistress gave me permission to type out a book of poems for the girls which I called "Chosen For You" as I chose only poems which I thought they would enjoy. I feel a great sense of achievement as regards the progress of all the English-speaking students in the Intermediate Division and hope we will continue this wonderful progress together in the coming year.

Helen Boruchowitz, Yeshurun Junior High School, Petach Tikva

THE PROBLEM OF ENGLISH SPELLING

Sir,

English spelling is a perennial problem for Hebrew-speaking pupils. The Hebrew writing system is based on consonants and a consonant plus a vowel gives a standard sound ; moreover, very early in their school life pupils learn to read and write Hebrew without vowel marks. This is the age when they are starting to learn English and not infrequently, here too, they apply this same principle and omit the vowels. In English, however, vowels are of prime importance.

Spelling patterns and basic reading skills

We were interested to read in the E.T.J. (No. 21, May '79) of Ada Fuchs's suggestion that reading and writing should be taught concomitantly with the pupil's first oral experience. We agree too, that when pupils start learning the alphabet it is important to stress the sounds of the letters rather than their names. In this way pupils can be taught to read simple words and sentences almost immediately. Even more important, in our opinion, at this early stage, is training the pupil not to see indivdual letters but to see groups of letters formng patterns within the word. One of the first such patterns is the pair of consonants "t" and "h" which together produce a new sound "th" ... the word "the" is one of the earliest the pupil hears. This, in turn, leads to a simple explanation that a combination of two vowels produces a new sound, e.g. "oo" in "look" and "book" which fit naturally into early conversation in class. It is of the utmost importance to emphasize such spelling patterns *from the start* especially for Hebrew-speaking children, for whom such combined sounds are a completely new concept.

By systematically grouping words according to their sound-spelling correspondences the process of recognising similarities is simplified, thus helping to solve many spelling and reading problems ; and once pupils learn to recognise spelling pattern-sound correlations in basic words, they are able to apply this knowledge to complicated unfamiliar words.

Miriam Herman and *Phyllis Sacks*

SUMMER SCHOOL FOR NEW IMMIGRANT TEACHERS, JERUSALEM, JULY 1980

Sir,

A three-week course for new immigrant teachers at the Greenberg College, Jerusalem concluded with examinations in English methodology and (for non-native speakers) proficiency ; these teachers must also take a longer course in Hebrew in order to qualify as teachers in English in the Israel school system. Despite the brevity of the course, there was definitely an atmosphere of unity of purpose and a unanimous feeling that, taken as a whole, the course had been interesting, stimulating and worthwhile. "The time went so quickly!" was the general opinion. However, three months earlier, when I was asked to prepare a course of study and to invite lecturers to participate, potential success seemed far from evident. Summer courses may be fine in theory, but evidently during the hot summer months pupils, teachers and lecturers all want a rest. Therefore those who do make the effort to be involved in a course during the Summer vacation deserve extra admiration. The students were a mixed group, including some who had only recently graduated and had never actually taught at all. Many of the participants were very new immigrants who were still confused by the myriad problems of adapting to a new society and a new language. In retrospect, I think that this last group really suffered owing to the intensive nature of the course, particularly those who were non-native speakers of English.

The programme included a practical workshop for making teaching aids for the less-able or younger learners, given by Miriam Gilad. Visits to the British Council library and a demonstration on the use of English by Television were greatly appreciated. The students especially appreciated the lectures given by Sheila Sar-Shalom.

Helen Gush, Jerusalem

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E.T.A.I.

Sir,

By the time this journal reaches print, the English Teachers' Association of Israel (E.T.A.I.) will have celebrated its first year of existence and activity.

E.T.A.I. was founded for the purpose of providing a suitable framework for English teachers to express themselves. Thus the association would be the proper forum for discussing matters specifically related to English as a foreign language or those of a wider educational significance. At no point whatsoever has E.T.A.I. been seen as fulfilling the role of an English teachers trade union.

Those of us who have been active in the field for a number of years have noted with distress the compartmentalization of English teachers into specialized sectors and the lack of contact with those teaching in other areas. Thus, for example, teachers in the elementary school have limited contact with colleagues in the junior high school or upper grades, and the latter have very little knowledge of what has been done in the lower grades.

This situation is clearly not desirable and if remedied could make for more efficient and productive teaching. Thus one of the objectives of E.T.A.I. has been to establish a dialogue among E.F.L. teachers of all grades and sectors (primary to university preparatory courses ; academic, technical and agricultural schools).

This wide range of inter-change could in our opinion make for an exciting exchange of ideas and opinions and without doubt the profession can but benefit from such a situation.

E.T.A.I. is ideally seen as best functioning in local branches on a city or regional basis with a locally elected committee organizing activities answering the specific needs of its members. Thus a branch in a specific area might wish to deal with teaching English to the underprivileged while another might want to concentrate on reading comprehension as taught at different levels.

The central committee will do its best in: aiding the local branches in initial planning ; establishing contact with those best able to aid ; or even help in inviting guest lecturers. Activities could well take the form of both formal lectures around specific topics or different workshops.

At the time of writing, two of the more active centers have been Haifa and Jerusalem which have organized a number of meetings. Perhaps it would be best to use the Jerusalem branch to illustrate what E.T.A.I. can do.

Starting out in May, they have held two meetings with a third planned for late September. The first meeting focussed on a guest lecturer and an introduction given by the national chair-person, Dr. Olshtain, while the second consisted of a lecture followed by a number of workshops. At this meeting a questionnaire was distributed in order to determine where local demands and interests lay.

In addition to concentrated activities, the energetic Jerusalem committee envisages certain specialist teachers running specific workshops throughout the year, groups meeting to write or exchange ideas and materials, and visits to be organized on an exchange basis.

In conclusion, one cannot but stress that E.T.A.I. is an association run by English teachers for English teachers. As E.T.A.I. grows, so will it be able to extend its range of functions. Without doubt, the inception of E.T.A.I. offers the English teacher in the field a wide and exciting prospect of new contacts and vistas in the English teaching field. We look forward to your joining us in this new venture.

English teachers interested in joining the association are requested to send a cheque of 20 Shekalim payable to the Association in Hebrew please: (אגודת המורים לאנגלית בישראל) to the following address:

H. Emanuel
9, Sprinzak St.
Kfar-Saba

(your local representative will get in touch with you)

Efraim Weintraub, Secretary E.T.A.I.

GROUP-ORAL TEST EXPERIMENT

ארבעה מאמרים אשר מתארים ניסוי בבחינות בגרות בהבעה בעל פה. במקום בחינות אישיות פרונטלית עם בוחן (דגם ראיון), יושבים התלמידים בקבוצות של ארבעה נבחנים ומשוחחים ביניהם, בנושא שצוין על כרטיס "הגרלה". על הבוחנים רק להעריך ולא להדריך את הנבחנים. הניסוי התקיים בקיץ תש"ם בבית הספר התיכון י"א תל־אביב ובגמנסיה הרצליה. המחברים: שלוש מורות ומפקחת על אנגלית בבית הספר.

NEWS FROM INSTRUCTIONAL TELEVISION

רעיונות חדשים בהוראת חומר הלמוד בסדרת המשדרים לכיתה ז', במתכונת עבודה בקבוצות וחלוקת תפקידים בין חברי כל קבוצה.

AN EXPERIMENT IN DESIGNING TESTS

דו"ח על ניסוי שנערך במסגרת קורס למורים מרכזים בחיבור מבחנים שהם פונקציונליים בעיקר, דהיינו שהנבחנים יעשו פעולות במקום לענות על שאלות. דוגמאות ממגמה לאופנה, ממגמה לחקלאות, ממגמה למזכירות, וכתיבת מכתב, בהענות למודעה בעתון, בכיתה עיונית.

THE ENGLISH CORNER

תיאור "הפינה לאנגלית" בעתון תלמידים לחיתה ו', דיון בבחירת הפריטים, ודוגמאות מהעתון של בית ספר רוממה, חיפה.

GAMES AND INTERACTION

תיאור כמה משחקים אשר מובילים לאינטר־אקציה בין תלמידים.

VOCABULARY GAMES

משחקים אשר ישפרו את אוצר המלים של תלמידים בבית ספר יסודי: השלמת מלים "שבורות". משחקי זכרון.

POLISHED DIAMONDS

תיאור הקורס בשפור הדיבור אשר ניתן לתלמידים באוניברסיטת בר אילן העתידים ללמד אנגלית בבתי הספר.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

מכתבים למערכת בנושאים: שעת הספריה בבית הספר, הצעות לעבודתו של המורה המרכז, הוראת אנגלית לתלמידים טעוני טפוח בשדרות, שיעורים לדוברי אנגלית, בעיות הכתיב באנגלית, קורס למורים עולים חדשים, אגודת המורים לאנגלית בישראל.

תמצית המאמרים בגליון זה:

INFORMATION FOR ENGLISH TEACHERS

מידע למורים לאנגלית: תכנית לימודים חדשה לבחינות הבגרות תשמ"ג; שינויים בתכנית בקריאת טכסטים, בגרות תשמ"א; הבחינה בהבנת הנשמע; האוניברסיטה הפתוחה — תעודה בלימודי השלמה למורים לאנגלית; ספרי לימוד באנגלית; השתלמויות למורים לאנגלית.

HEARING AND COMPREHENDING

מאמר מאת הפרופסור וילגה ריברס אשר בקרה בארץ, נושא ההרצאה הזו על "השמיעה ועל הבנת הנשמע" היה הנושא המרכזי לסדרת ההרצאות בארץ.

ON CHOOSING A TEXTBOOK

קני המידה לבחירת ספר לימוד לאנגלית בישראל. המחבר טוען, שעל כל ספר לימוד לאנגלית לצאת מנקודת הראות של התלמיד הישראלי, עם כל ההשלכות הלשוניות החברתיות והתרבותיות הנובעות מכך. עקרונות, אין להשתמש בספר לימוד מחו"ל, אולם יש מקום לחומר עזר, לספרי הדקדוק ולמקראות מחו"ל, בתנאים מסויימים.

ALTERNATIVES IN SECONDARY SCHOOL ENGLISH

יש לשנות את "אוירת הכיתה" בשעור לאנגלית, ולהפוך את התלמיד למוקד ההוראה, הצעות לחומר לימוד ולפעילות התלמידים בנושאים האלה: המדע הבדיוני, דרכי התקשורת, ומודעות המסחתריות בעתונות.

SCHOOLS FOR SOCIALLY-DISADVANTAGED

דו"ח על ה"עבודה מעשית" של תלמידות בסמיטר שיין אשר לימדו בבתי ספר לתלמידים טעוני טפוח. נושאי הדו"ח — תכונות התלמידים הטעוני טיפוח, בעיות בניהול השעור, ופעולות בכיתה.

משרד החינוך והתרבות
המזכירות הפדגוגית - הפיקוח על הוראת האנגלית

עלון למורים לאנגלית

מספר 24

טבת תשמ"א, דצמבר 1980